Etai FORUM
English Teachers' Association of Israel
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TESOL

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ETAI Mission Statement

ETAI (English Teachers' Association of Israel) is a grassroots, voluntary organization concerned with the professional development of its close to 1000 members. The membership list includes English teachers from all sectors and at all levels of education – elementary, junior high and secondary school, college and university.

ETAI offers professional support, information, forums for discussion and practical suggestions and resources to help English teachers deepen their expertise and grow in their careers through its local events, regional and national conferences and its journal The ETAI Forum.

The main driving force behind all the organization's activities is to encourage teachers to seek the appropriate avenues to keep up-to-date with the latest research in the field, materials, methodologies, technology, essential for their lives as English language teachers.

It is our job as a teachers' association to supply a variety of arenas to foster professionalism. These include organizing events throughout the country, keeping in touch with the English Inspectorate and the Ministry of Education and maintaining our connections with international English teachers' organizations as an affiliate of TESOL and an associate of IATEFL.

Message of THANKS

Thank you to all the writers who invested time and thought and contributed to this issue of the ETAI forum. Thank you to Eric Cohen Books for laying out the ETAI FORUM. Thank you to Marna in the ETAI office for all of your hard work related to this issue.

Michele Ben and *Amanda Caplan*, Co-Editors

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

New Year, New Directions and New Beginnings

One of the first things new immigrants are told when they arrive in Israel is "Kol Hahatchalot Kashot – all beginnings are difficult". However, as we all know, life would not go on without "beginnings".

Every school year begins with us in the classroom despite the difficulties and the disappointments of the previous year. Every New Year begins with resolutions that we have made before but failed to carry out. Yet we make them again and start over.

At ETAI too, we have made resolutions, been disappointed by failures and struggled with difficulties. However this year, ETAI seems to have got off to a great start. An idea that was born many years ago, but was never realized, is now a reality.

Under the slogan, "If you can't come to ETAI, ETAI will come to you", we have had two very successful mini-conferences in Hazor and Ma'alot. At the time of writing this, we now have mini-conferences organized for the Sharon area (October 16th), Be'er Sheva (October 24th) and Holon (November 1st). If, by the time you receive this issue of the Forum, you have missed these events in your area, watch out on ETNI for details of additional events coming your way soon.

These local events which were but dreams in the past are now features in an English teacher's calendar and are just one of the "new beginnings" initiated by ETAI and its various committees. In addition, two issues of our electronic newsletter have been published on ETNI and hopefully it will continue once a month to bring members closer to what is happening in our organization.

Another part of our "facelift", is a wonderful ETAI logo which appears now on the Forum and will be used for our stationery. We have some more ETAI "firsts" in the making and these will be revealed at a later date.

So, as you can see, despite the difficulty, the ETAI board members and their helpers have brought you some "new beginnings" to start the year (religious, academic or any other). None of this would be possible without the dedication of the busy people who devote their time and energy to all of us. Michele Ben and Amanda Caplan have undertaken to edit the Forum – a formidable job indeed. In addition, they have become valuable members of the board and are contributing in many ways. Fran Sokel was responsible for initiating events in the North and has carried through together with the help of Penny Ur and others. Mitzi Geffen (also a new board member) and Laurie Orenstein have joined Riva Levenchuk and Inessa Roe in organizing the "Tommy Sands" event in Be'er Sheva. I am sure that they will now form a strong committee for conferences and events in that area. Laura Shashua has undertaken the organization of ETAI events in Holon and Ahuva Kellman and Elaine Alkalay (veteran board members) are organizing events in the Sharon area.

If you feel you would like to be involved in your area, either with ideas, planning, organization or registration on the day, please don't hesitate to volunteer. That's part of the idea of our aim of bringing ETAI to you.

My message to all the English teachers of Israel is:

"Bite off more than you can chew, then chew it.
Plan more than you can do, then do it."
"Shoot for the moon.
Even if you miss, you'll land among the stars." (Anonymous)
In fact, I know that most of you are already there.
Best wishes for a healthy, fruitful and successful year.

Nava Horovitz
Chair

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

"Teachers, I believe, are the most responsible and important members of society
because their professional efforts affect the fate of the earth."

Helen Caldicott, author and peace activist

This school year has had a rocky beginning. The strike reflects the efforts of teachers to be responsible for the fate of the educational system in this country. We hope that the resolution of the strike will afford all teachers the status and recognition by society that we deserve.

The many varied and interesting articles in this issue of the Forum showcase the professional efforts, experiences, ideas and beliefs of the ETAI members who wrote them. We trust that you will find something here to help you in your efforts to affect the fate of your corner of the earth.

Michele Ben and *Amanda Caplan*
ETAI Forum Co-Editors

Changing of the Guard: A New ETAI Treasurer

Marna Snyder – *etaioffice@gmail.com*

ETAI's treasurer, Tessa Shrem, has recently announced her resignation. A veteran teacher and English coordinator at Jerusalem's Michlelet ORT, Tessa has been the ETAI treasurer for the past seven years, and has also been a member of the Jerusalem conference committee, organizing the Annual National Summer Conference.
Tessa will be missed, not only for her dedication to ETAI, but for her distinctive sense of humor and her practical, hard-headed approach to solving the problems which arise.

Our new ETAI treasurer is David L. Young, no stranger to readers of the Forum, as he's penned numerous articles in our recent issues, including this one. Born and educated in England, David immigrated to Israel in 1968. He received his MA in English Literature and Language from Tel-Aviv University. He has taught mainly in junior high and high schools, with some experience lecturing at Tel-Aviv University and the Hebrew University. He is currently teaching English and drama at the Israel Academy of Science and Arts, Jerusalem.
We wish David every success in his new post as ETAI treasurer!

We cordially invite you to the

ETAI WINTER CONFERENCE IN BEER-SHEVA

Thursday, December 6, 2007

9:00 a.m. - 16:00 p.m.

Theme: "Perspectives"

Kaye Academic College of Education
33 Yehuda Halevy St.

Registration at the door:

ETAI members 25 NIS Non-members 50 NIS

A bus leaving Ra'anana to be arranged. Contact the ETAI office: 02-500-1844.

ETAI Membership Dues

Members	175 NIS
Full-time students*	120 NIS
New immigrants / New teachers	120 NIS
Retirees	120 NIS / 100 NIS**
Overseas members	250 NIS

*must present a valid student ID card

**a special reduction given to retirees who bring in a new member

New member / Membership renewal form can be downloaded from the ETAI site: http://www.etni.org.il/etai/dues.html.

If you can't come to ETAI, then ETAI will come to you!

In the past few months there have been four mini-conferences around the country. The first two, organized by Fran Sokel, were in the North, one in Carmiel and one in Ma'alot Tarshicha. These were such a success that other teachers rose to the challenge and organized conferences in their area. ETAI moved to the centre of the country, to Kfar Saba, where Ahuva Kellman and Elaine Alcalay organized another successful mini-conference.

All the mini-conferences, no matter where, give teachers the opportunity to meet and chat with local colleagues. The speakers are chosen with the local audience in mind and there's the bonus of a 'private' book exhibition. And, of course, the mini-conferences are enjoyable and exciting, making it well-worth the effort of getting there even after a day's work at school.

Report from the North.

On Tuesday, September 4th, 2007, I had the privilege of attending a Mini-ETAI Conference in Ma'alot Tarshicha. ETAI came to us, in the North!

The guest speakers were Elisheva Barkan who gave us wonderful insights from her research on reading. Penny Ur gave us great ideas for the first few lessons of the year and some activities. One of the activities was a question and answer race against the clock. I tried it and found it exciting for the pupils as well as for myself. There were also sessions on Multisensory Spelling Rules with Stephanie Fuchs for the elementary school teachers. I went to her session and found her ideas refreshing and imaginative. For those teachers in the JHS and HS, Rachel Rivkind gave a session on grammar dictation and Marcia Grayson gave a session on literature circles.

I am grateful to those who spent hours arranging and bringing the conference to the teachers in the north. I am already looking forward to the next one.

Susan Osher, HaReut School, Carmiel

Report from the Sharon Area

"If you can't come to ETAI, ETAI will come to you" in the Sharon area. On Tuesday, October 16th, 2007, approximately 90 teachers got together at Bar Lev Junior High School in Kfar Saba for the first ETAI mini conference in the Sharon area.

The theme of the conference was "Food for the Soul" in order to give teachers new ideas how to energize and cope in their classrooms. The plenary session was given by Penny Ur of Oranim Teaching College. Penny spoke about adapting textbook exercises to make them more interesting and motivating for the students. During her session, the teachers present had a chance to put into Penny's ideas into practice.

After a short break where teachers visited the book exhibition, the conference continued with two parallel sessions. One was "The Anatomy of Anger or How to Survive Those Hard days in School" given by Diana Finzi – an Educational Psychologist and Psychotherapy. This workshop started with a short dramatic presentation of Strindberg's "The Stronger" by Ingride Lewis and Evelyn Solomonov. It was followed by an explanation of what anger is and how we can combat anger in the classroom.

The second session was given by Michele Ben and was called "Using Games and Having Fun in the English Classroom". Michele gave us the pedagogical reasons for incorporating games in the classrooms; and showed us examples of different types of board games that teachers can use in the classroom.

To sum up, the mini conference in the Sharon area was a resounding success that we hope will become a permanent fixture in the ETAI calendar.

Elaine Alcalay and Ahuva Kellman
Conference Conveners

In the next issue of the ETAI Forum we hope to bring you a report from the Azur mini-conference organized by Laura Shashua which took place on November 1st, as this goes to print, and therefore cannot be included here.

The ETAI Board would like to thank all the organizers of these conferences, Elaine Alcalay, Ahuva Kellman, Laura Shashua and Fran Sokel, for all their hard work. We would also like to thank the presenters for their contribution.

The ETAI Board would also like to thank Laurie Ornstein for initiating the Tommy Sands Concert in Beer Sheva and Kaye College for hosting it.

If you would like to organize a mini-conference in your area, or present at one, please contact the ETAI office where we will be happy to help you.

KORCZAK'S CHILDREN COMES TO ETAI AND TO THE CLASSROOM

Yakir Feldman *Yakir.Feldman@comverse.com*

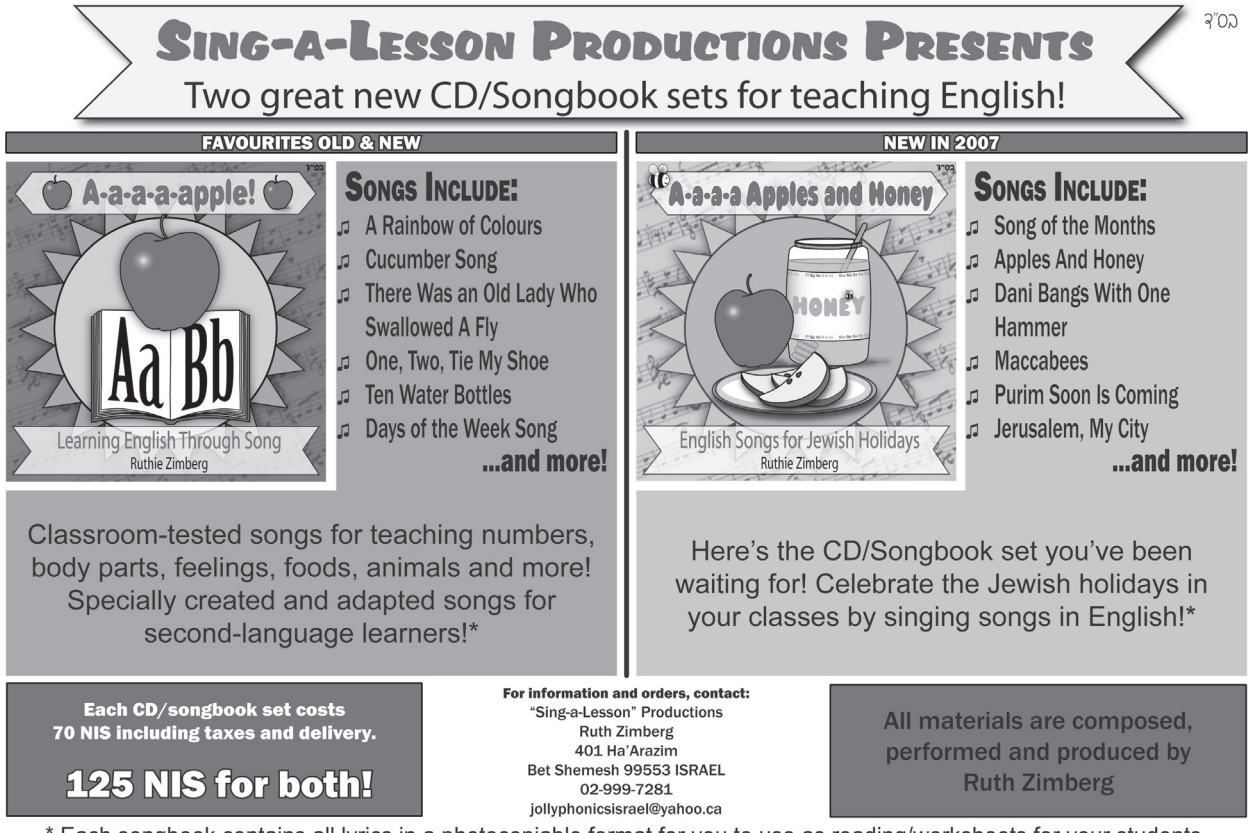
On July 10, 2007, JEST (The Jerusalem English-Speaking Theater) came to the ETAI summer convention at David Yellin College in Jerusalem and delighted a tightly-packed standing-room-only audience of English teachers with a special presentation that included a live performance of three selected scenes from JEST's stunning hit play Korczak's Children. About 20 adult and children actors participated in the performance which was directed by Leah Stoller.

Korczak's Children, a sensitive and entertaining play, takes place in 1942 and focuses on the last days of Korczak's orphanage in the Warsaw ghetto. Based on the real people and events, it brings the orphanage and the children vividly back to life. Korczak's ghetto orphanage brims with joy and a surprising amount of humor — guided by the vision and devotion of the colossal figure who nurtures "his children" to maintain a society of fun, caring and dignity in the face of an increasingly bleak external reality.

A key part of JEST's message at the convention was that JEST actively supports teachers and schools interested in incorporating theater into their curriculum with a range of materials for classroom use without any cost. This includes scripts of the play, posters, pictures, background materials and more. JEST also frequently comes into schools, as several Jerusalem-area schools already know -- sending teams of adult and student actors to conduct hands-on seminars with English classes. Additionally, JEST provides special reduced rates to help student groups come to the theater.

Contact JEST for information: 02 642-0908, lstoller@netvision.net.il

Yakir Feldman has taught English for 20 years in the USA and in Israel. He frequently incorporated theater into his classroom, and this is what many of his students remember best. He has been a marketing writer for Comverse since the year 2000, and has been involved with JEST onstage and backstage since 2004.



Institutional Membership

As stated in the ETAI mission statement, our aim is to promote the professional development of teachers of English in Israel and to provide a range of services for this aim to be achieved.

In addition to other initiatives taken by ETAI recently, we have decided to introduce Institutional Membership. We know that many English teachers are interested in being members of ETAI but find the expense burdensome. We feel that since pupils, schools and principals benefit directly from teachers' professional development, principals should be asked to fund their teachers' membership in ETAI. Institutional Membership also gives teachers who have not previously been involved in ETAI the opportunity to do so through their school.

Please show this letter and the registration form overleaf to the principal of your school and encourage him / her to take advantage of this worthwhile offer. You, your colleagues and your school have much to gain from Institutional membership in ETAI.

English Teachers' Association of Israel - ETAI - אגודת המורים לאנגלית בישראל
Incorporating ISRATESOL رابطة المعلمين لتعليم اللغة الانكليزية في إسرائيل
ETAI is an Associate of IATEFL and an Affiliate Member of TESOL
ת.ד. 7663 ירושלים 91076 טל. 02-5001844 פקס. 02-5001851 מס' עמותה 58-013-925-5

חשון תשס"ח

לכבוד מנהל/ת בית הספר,

<u>הנדון: חברות בית ספרית באגודת המורים לאנגלית בישראל.</u>

אנו פונים אליך כדי להציג את הארגון שלנו - אגודת המורים האנגלית בישראל English Teachers' Association of Israel (ETAI) שמטרתה היא פיתוח פרופסיונלי של המורים לאנגלית בכל שכבות הלימוד ובכל המגזרים וכן שיפור רמת ההישגים של התלמידים הלומדים אנגלית.

אנו מארגנים ימי עיון אזוריים במשך שנת הלימודים בחיפה, תל אביב ובאר שבע, וכנס ארצי שנתי בירושלים בקיץ. אחת לארבע שנים כנס זה הוא כנס בין לאומי.
כמו כן ,שלש פעמים בשנה, ETAI מוציאה לאור עלון שתוכנו מאמרים, משאבים ורעיונות מעשיים לכיתה המוצגים על ידי מורים מנוסים בתחום הוראת האנגלית בבתי ספר הלכה למעשה. האגודה עומדת בקשר תמידי עם הפיקוח על הוראת אנגלית במשרד החינוך, ועם המוציאים לאור של ספרי לימוד באנגלית. כמו כן קיימים קשרים הדוקים עם הארגונים הבינלאומיים המקבילים של המורים לאנגלית.

עם העצמת הנהלת בתי הספר לדרבן ולדאוג להתפתחות המקצועית של מוריו, והרצון לשפר את ההשגים באנגלית של תלמידים/ות, אנו פונים אליך בהצעה וביוזמה חדשה כדלקמן:
חברות בית ספרית באגודת ETAI, שתכלול:

א. השתתפות בימי עיון אזוריים והשתתפות בכנס הארצי בקיץ במחיר מופחת.
ב. קבלת עותק או מספר עותקים של העלון ישירות לבית הספר.
ג. קבלת מידע והודעות הקשורים לפעילות האגודה ישירות לבית הספר.

דמי חברות שנתית רגילה	175 ש"ח	
דמי חברות שנתית ל-2-7 מורים	140 ₪ למורה	20% הנחה
דמי חברות שנתית ליותר מ7- מורים	130 ₪ למורה	25% הנחה

מצ"ב טופס הצטרפות בית ספרית. מלאו אותו ושלחו למשרדינו עם התשלום המתאים.
לשאלות והבהרות נא לפנות למשרדנו בטלפון (02-5001844) , פקס (02-5001851) או דואר אלקטרוני (etaioffice@gmail.com).

אנו ב ETAI מעוניינים לעודד מורים לאנגלית להצטרף לארגון ולהופכם לחלק מקהילת המורים לאנגלית העוסקת בפיתוח מקצועי. אנו מקווים שגם אתה/את כמנהל/ת בי"ס רואה את חשיבות הצטרפות בית ספרך וצוות המורים לאגלית לפעילות שלנו.

בברכה,
נוה הורוביץ, יושבת ראש ETAI

טופס חברות בית-ספרית ב- ETAI

פרטי בית הספר:

שם בית הספר: _____ יסודי / חט"ב / תיכון

כתובת: _____ טלפון: _____

פקס: _____ דוא"ל: _____ .

שם המנהל/ת: _____

שם הרכז/ת להוראת אנגלית: _____ .

מידע על מחירי הצטרפות:

	175 ₪	דמי חברות שנתית רגילה
20% הנחה	140 ₪ למורה	דמי חברות שנתית ל-7-2 מורים
25% הנחה	130 ₪ למורה	דמי חברות שנתית ליותר מ-7 מורים

פרטי הצטרפות:

	שם המורה	טלפון	דוא"ל		שם המורה	טלפון	דוא"ל
1.				6.			
2.				7.			
3.				8.			
4.				9.			
5.				10.			

סה"כ מצטרפים: _____ סה"כ לתשלום: _____ ₪.

הערות:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

THE USE OF L1 IN ENGLISH TEACHING

Penny Ur *pennyur@gmail.com*

The situation today is that there are no clear guidelines on the use of the mother tongue (L1) in English lessons. Most teachers feel vaguely that use of the L1 should be minimalized, but if challenged find it difficult to say why. And we get little help from training courses and 'hishtalmuyot' which give no guidelines on why you should or should not use L1, or when it might, or might not, be useful to do so.

How do you feel about using the L1 in English lessons? Try filling in the following table.

	True on the whole	False on the whole
I try to avoid using L1 in the classroom.		
When I find myself using L1, I tend to feel a bit guilty about it.		
I try to avoid translating new words, use translation only as a last resort.		
If an L1 translation is necessary, I'd elicit from a student rather than giving it myself.		
I might translate orally, but would not write up L1 translations on the board.		
I would not ask my pupils to do full translation exercises of lists of words, expressions or sentences (English – L1).		
I would not ask my pupils to do full translation exercises (English – L1).		

You probably found that most of your ticks were in the left-hand column.

If you are against using L1 - why?

If I ask teachers why they are against using the L1 – here are some of the answers I get.

1. **Authoritative disapproval**

   "I was told not to use L1 when I was training." "The Inspector doesn't approve."

   Thinking like this is OK only if you feel other people have the right to make decisions for you as to what is the best way to teach! I think this is 'passing the buck' and not a valid reason for avoiding L1 use.

2. **Waste of lesson time**

   "If I use L1 all the time, they won't get enough exposure to English."

   This is a good justification for limiting use of L1, but not for banning it altogether. There are times when use of English becomes a waste of time and demoralizing as well. For example, when learners aren't understanding anything.

3. **L2 learning should imitate L1 learning which is done only through the target language**

   "That's the way children learn their first language; it's the natural way to learn a language."

   But L2 by definition is NOT the first language, and you learn it quite differently. An L2 learner already has a language which is used to communicate: there's no way it can simply be ignored when learning a new language. The 'natural' way to approach a new language is often via the old. What kind of dictionary do you naturally use when you want to find the meaning of a new L2 word: L2-L2 or L2-L1?

4. **I want them to 'think in English'**

   "I want them to formulate their ideas straight into English, not go via their mother tongue."

   But they won't. And why should they? We want them to communicate fluently and accurately in the L2; does that necessarily mean thinking in it? What language do you count in?

5. **The native-speaker model**

   "I want them to be as like native speakers as possible, rather than Hebrew or Arabic-speakers who also know English. And native speakers don't translate or engage with other languages."

On the contrary, Hebrew / Arabic speakers who also know English are precisely what I want them to be. Denying the learner's L1, or devaluing it in the classroom, denies or devalues the learner's linguistic identity. And anyway, trying to be like native speakers is mission impossible. We are trying to achieve what has become known as 'English-knowing bilingualism': a concept coined to describe a situation where the person is fully competent in English, while maintaining the L1 as his or her dominant language and basis for cultural identity.

6. **Use of L1 will encourage interference**

   "If I encourage them to think of L1 equivalents, the L1 will interfere and produce mistakes."

   L1 will interfere in any case. In fact, the only way you can combat interference is by making learners aware of the problems, by being frank and open about them and discussing why interference-based mistakes take place. Only through knowing why they make these mistakes can learners consciously try to avoid them.

7. **Language as communication**

   "I want them to use English to communicate: translation isn't communication."

   Hopefully we are doing a lot of meaningful and communicative work in English in the classroom. But this doesn't mean that anything that isn't communication is 'taboo'. Occasional comparisons between L1 and L2 can contribute to accuracy as well as, ultimately, to fluency.

   Most of the arguments for denying L1 a place in the L2 classroom can be easily refuted. The only really convincing argument is the importance of providing our learners with as much time as possible actually being exposed to and producing the target language. But this does not mean never using L1; it means using it only when we have a clear and cogent reason for doing so that is temporarily more important than using the L2.

   There are, it is true, places and times when over-use of the L1 is definitely counter-productive. Let's look at these situations before going on to see where we CAN use L1 productively.

When does use of L1 get counter-productive?

1. When we're using L1 to say things the pupils could understand reasonably well in English;
2. When pupils are saying things in L1 they could in fact, with a bit of help or encouragement, manage in English;
3. When it leads us to neglect teaching basic English interactional language (e.g. instructions, useful requests from learners) because it's easier to say it in L1;
4. When we're using L1 instead of making the effort to rephrase in simple English and be understood.

When does using the L1 help?

1. **To save time (for English use!)**

   <u>For vocabulary and grammar explanation, and instructions</u>

   Scenario: I take several minutes to try to explain a pair-work activity in English: in the end either I or one of the pupils has to explain in L1 anyway. So why not explain in L1 in the first place, and leave more time for doing the actual activity? Some people routinely explain first in English and then in L1: it's as if they are conveying the message 'don't bother to try to understand the English, a mother-tongue translation is coming up anyway'.

2. **To clarify**

   <u>Again, for vocabulary and grammar explanations and instruction</u>

   Scenario: I say the word happy and show a picture like this: Or I say 'happy = שמח. They take about the same time: but the translation is clearer: the picture could be taken to mean smile or face or head. Or how about using both picture and translation together?

3. **To practice**

   <u>Translation exercises</u>

   Scenario: As a change from asking pupils to provide the past form of a verb to match a present, I simply give them the past in L1 and ask them how they say this in English: "How do you say 'הלכתי'?" "How do you say הוא 'ראה'?". This represents far more truly the way learners in fact think: they probably formulate the past sentence in their heads in L1 and then need to translate it into L2. Why go via the present?

4. **To test**

   Scenario: When testing if learners have mastered the question forms: instead of asking them to invent questions to match answers, or fill gaps in questions with forms of like do / be / have, I simply ask them to translate simple questions like איפה אתה גר?. If they can do so successfully then that shows they have internalized the question form and are aware that questions in English are formed with 'operator' verbs.

5. **To interact more directly and personally**

   Scenario: There has been some sad, or violent, or embarrassing event in the class, and we need to talk about it; I'll initiate a discussion straight into L1, so that everyone can easily participate. In this case participation and full comprehension is temporarily more important than the language learning.

6. **To provide information that is difficult to explain in L1**

   Scenario: I want to explain why we're doing some learning activity, or give some cultural information: again, I'll probably do so in L1, because I can make the basic information more clear and attractive that way. And again; making the information clear and attractive is more important, temporarily, than immediate language-learning benefits.

Conclusion

There is no rule that you should 'never' use L1 in lessons; nor, on the other hand, is there any excuse for using L1 most of the time. Like many other teaching strategies, the use of L1 involves rapid on-your-feet decision-making: is it worth switching to L1 at this point? Or would it be better to stay with English? I hope that this article has given you some ideas that will help you make the right decisions.

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TO WRITE OR NOT TO WRITE: DECISIONS AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL

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As elementary teachers we are faced with decisions as to when and how we are to teach writing. In order to make informed decisions we need to consider the questions: "What is writing?" "What factors influence our actions vis-à-vis the teaching of writing?" "What exactly do we teach under the umbrella of writing?"

WHAT IS WRITING?

Persky, Danna and Jin (2003) were not very positive in answering this question. They said "Writing is a difficult and demanding task, and problems with written expression are common." On surveying the situation among US students, they indicated that only 33% have partial mastery of knowledge writing skills while only 1% has "advanced" writing skills. Yates (1996) was much more positive and quoted young children's answers. Some quotes were: "It's something you have to learn to do so your teacher can mark it." "It's something you have to keep tidy and try not to make mistakes." "It's a way of communicating things that are in your head when you don't want to talk about them." The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English provided more clear cut definitions of writing: "1. words that have been written or printed 2. books, poems etc. in general, especially those by a particular writer or about a particular subject 3. the activity of writing books, stories etc. 4. the particular way that someone writes with a pen or pencil." Before moving on to the next issue ask: "Is writing squiggles (the medium) or what it's saying (the message)?"

INFLUENCES ON OUR WRITING

There are many things which help us to reach a positive answer to the question posed in the title of this article. Curriculum requirements are such that we must teach writing. Writing is in all the areas of learning. A cursory examination of the standards which drive our curriculum show writing is a requirement in each

of the domains. Outside influences also support the teaching of writing. Societal demands, as seen in the need to conduct informal electronic and written communications with other speakers of English, support teaching writing. Tertiary education demands which require a certain proficiency in written English trickle down to the elementary level. Furthermore, the widespread use of computers has led to more emphasis on writing.

The reasons for teaching writing to students of English as a foreign language include reinforcement, language development, learning style and, most importantly, writing as a skill in its own right.

Reinforcement: Some students acquire languages in a purely oral/aural way, but most of us benefit greatly from seeing the language written down. The visual demonstration of language construction is invaluable for both our understanding of how it all fits together and as an aid to committing the new language to memory. Students often find it useful to write sentences using new language shortly after they have studied it.

Language development: We can't be sure, but it seems that the actual process of writing (rather like the process of speaking) helps us to learn as we go along. The mental activity we have to go through in order to construct proper written texts is all part of the ongoing learning experience.

Learning style: Some students are fantastically quick at picking up language just by looking and listening. For the rest of us, it may take a little longer. For many learners, the time to think things through, to produce language in a slower way, is invaluable. Writing is appropriate for such learners. It can also be a quiet reflective activity instead of the rush and bother of interpersonal face-to-face communication.

Writing as a skill: By far the most important reason for teaching writing, of course, is that it is a basic language skill, just as important as speaking, listening and reading. Students need to know how to write letters, how to put written reports together, how to reply to advertisements – and increasingly, how to write using electronic media. They need to know some of writing's special conventions (punctuation, paragraph construction etc.) just as they need to know how to pronounce spoken English appropriately. Part of our job is to give them that skill.

WHAT EXACTLY DO WE TEACH UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF WRITING?

At the foundation level (elementary students and non-readers) writing is seen as primarily reinforcing and developing reading. It is also the idea of a means of communication. However, our elementary pupils need to first be taught how to form the letters and this physical process of how to teach letter formation relates to the primary aim.

There are two approaches to teaching the letters. One is according to the ABC, and another is grouping the letters of the alphabet according to the way they are written. A teacher's choice often depends on the textbook used. I suggest that teachers explain to the pupils the importance of writing correctly. One must emphasize that because English is written from left to right the letters must be written in the same direction, thus enabling quicker writing when the letters have been mastered. This aspect of directionality requires numerous exercises which are provided by the many excellent textbook writers in Israel.

Following are suggestions to further reinforce the forming of the letters correctly:

- Always draw lines on the board in order to show the pupils the correct size and way that the letter is formed. Show the pupils how each letter is formed correctly. Use the concept of "Roof-house-garden" to show how letters are of different heights.
- Ask pupils to come to the board and write the letters.
- Tell the pupils to draw the letters in the air with their fingers. Always make sure they are going in the correct direction. Remember to position yourself where the students can see the correct way to form the letter and you can see your students. This inevitably requires you to stand side on.
- Tell the pupils to trace the letters with their fingers on the backs of their friends. Play a guessing game: Pupil A draws a letter on the back of pupil B. Pupil B needs to guess the letter. Then they exchange roles.
- Hand out plasticine or pieces of string and toothpicks and let the pupils form the letters.
- While pupils are working, walk around and check they are correctly forming the letters and their directionality is correct. One needs to emphasize the objective "writing shall be legible".

Once the elementary pupils can physically form the letters then writing can be used "to reinforce and develop reading." This is true at all levels. Writing reinforces reading skills and increases vocabulary. Our former English Chief inspector Rafael Gefen (1988) stated that "writing at all levels serves primarily to reinforce the vocabulary and grammar learnt orally or

from a reading text. i.e. all new items intended for active use must not only be heard, said and read, but also written."

Communication and meaning are also vital to teaching writing. Here we need to encourage the pupils to express ideas, describe scenes, write a story, and share their opinions about a book read and many such "creative" activities. It is important to remember that writing is a process and the issue of evaluating student writing. But these will be better left to a further article.

In conclusion, my answer to the title question is unequivocally TO WRITE. As elementary teachers please remember that writing is important and that it involves several skills and must be integrated with other English language tasks. A teacher's enthusiasm about writing and encouraging elementary students to express themselves in writing is very important.

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WALKING THE TIGHT-ROPE WITH WEAK LEARNERS

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Teachers working with weak learners often find themselves engaged in a balancing act. Even if their classes are comparatively small, the different needs of the various students ensure that teachers are constantly balancing one thing against another in an attempt to provide solutions for everyone. For these teachers, a general syllabus for the whole class based on a common text book is an unattainable dream. Specific goals or benchmarks based on age or grade level are also out of place. They are expected to take into account the emotional, social, cognitive and academic needs of all their students. However, teachers simply do not have enough time to sit with each student separately and at times students' different needs can even negate each other, which leads to a situation where the teacher is in a constant dilemma regarding which students' needs get priority.

It is important that teachers, management and parents are aware of this dilemma and of the decisions a teacher has to make regarding the delicate situation in a class with weak learners. If teachers spend most of the time rushing from student to student, desperately trying to give each student individual teaching, there is the danger that nobody will get anything worthwhile. This may not be a 'politically correct' statement - teachers are expected to give all students personalized attention according to their needs – but it is the reality we have to deal with in Israeli schools. It is simply impossible to teach reading on five minutes 'stolen' time twice a week, or to provide four years' worth of missed grammar by preparing differentiated worksheets. So, it is necessary to define and articulate the dilemmas in the classroom, accept that it is necessary and legitimate for a teacher to make decisions and prioritize and then teach accordingly. Like a tight-rope walker, progress can only be made if the teacher moves in a clear direction, without continually swaying from side to side.

Teachers' dilemmas are many and varied. Some examples of those particularly concerning weak learners are:

Level of Learning: Do you work on a high level to 'pull up' the students, but take the risk of it being too hard, or do you work on a lower level, which maybe will not push them enough?

Choice of Books: Do you use regular, grade appropriate books to make weak students feel more connected to the rest of the class, but which may be hard for them, or do you use low-level material which caters more to their level but they might find it boring or even insulting?

Teaching Style: Do you 'spoon feed' students to help them pass exams, or do you encourage them to develop work strategies of their own to become independent learners?

Feedback: Do you give clear, objective feedback to students and parents regarding where they stand in comparison with grade level, or give only positive feedback relating to personal progress?

Classroom Atmosphere: Do you insist on a serious, work-oriented atmosphere to ensure optimum learning or do you allow for more relaxed fun and games to reduce pressure?

Regular or Special Treatment: Do you treat weak students as all the others, with the same rules and expectations, or treat them as special cases? Do you insist they complete all tasks or make allowances?

Reading: Do you put all your effort into teaching non-readers to decode, or use the time to develop their English grammar, vocabulary and communication skills?

Participation: Do you try for maximum participation, calling on students at random, despite the threat the weaker, more timid students often feel in this situation, or allow students to choose whether to participate or not by raising their hands?

These are just a few of the dilemmas teachers face, and all can affect students' progress. Even apparently trivial considerations can be decisive in helping or hindering weak students to succeed. There are no right or wrong answers here, only methods more or less suited to different students and classes. Whereas one weak student might desperately strive to keep up with the rest of the class and, with a bit of extra help, manage to do so, another weak student will be totally demoralized if he doesn't understand everything and simply 'switch off'. Whereas in a special class where most are non-readers a teacher might decide to invest the first few months working intensively on phonic reading skills, in a class where the majority can read already there may be no other choice than to 'sacrifice the few for the many' and concentrate on developing other language skills.

It is not easy to make these decisions, especially since they may not provide the ideal solution for every student in a class, but there are some general steps that can help. These include :

- Analyze the class. Try and define the problems and needs to yourself.
- Decide on your priorities.
- Think of feasible solutions.
- Reach a consensus with English coordinator / Classteacher / Headteacher regarding expectations.
- Don't be ashamed to admit you CAN'T do something, or need help. (Remember, in a regular 1st Grade class kids learn to read in L1 with a teacher's aide in class to help. Where is yours?)
- Report on what you are doing and why.

When carrying out this process it is important to relate to each class separately, taking into account the individual students involved and also the basic situation – is it a regular or a special class? The different needs of weak learners cannot be related to in the same way when they sit in a regular heterogeneous class of 35 or in a special class of 10.

Here are tips for working with weak learners in both frameworks.

10 Tips for working with weak learners in regular classes

1. Make sure each child or group knows what they are expected to be doing.
2. Write the lesson plan on the board every lesson or, if you have several groups, prepare your lesson plans on A3 paper and pin up each group's plan separately, so pupils can refer to these instead of asking the perpetual "What do we need to do now?"
3. If they are sitting in the same classroom, keep weak learners connected with the topic of the main lesson as much as possible.
4. Give proper lessons to the weak group on a regular basis. One whole lesson a week or two 20 minute lessons. The others can read, do project work, workbook activities, etc during this lesson. Don't expect weak students to learn on 'stolen time' .
5. Work with the under-achievers at the BEGINNING of a lesson, not at the end.
6. Teach independent working skills and insist pupils use these when you are working with the weakies: dictionary use, peer help, etc. instead of disturbing your concentration with the special group. Don't break!
7. Have a selection of busywork activities available at all times and ensure pupils know where they are and how to do them: Books, Newspaper articles, unseens, webquests if there is access to computers, etc. This will allow you more time for teaching and less time wasted on 'directing traffic'.

8. Be aware of the potential of pair-work when strong and weak pupils work together.
9. Plan the work the under-achievers will be doing, including exactly which workbook exercises they need to do before the lesson. Some exercises are more valuable than others and some are more suited to independent work than others.
10. Give different homework to solve some of the problems of heterogeneity.

    Homework for weak pupils should consolidate the class work; finishing what they didn't complete in class or giving extra practice on a skill learned in class.

    Homework for strong pupils should be challenging, encouraging them to develop and apply their new language skills to more complex tasks.

10 Tips for working with classes of weak learners

1. Define the needs of each student. List their strengths and weaknesses.
2. Help students to develop self-awareness regarding their language learning : 'What am I good at? What do I find difficult? What do I need to work on? What is my next goal? What do I like? How do I learn best?'
3. Try and provide for the needs of all, however if this is clearly impossible, prioritize. Choose a few main skills to work on and concentrate on these.
4. Make it clear to all involved if a particular student is not receiving what he / she needs and why. Think 'out of the box' to provide a solution.
5. Designate certain times - each at least once a month - when you will specifically sit with each pupil and formally mark down where they are and what they have to do next. Prepare and use official feedback forms for this and fill them in together with the pupil. Have the class doing busywork at these times.
6. Photocopy feedback forms and send copies to superiors and parents on the same day or at least the same week you make them.
7. Give several short exercises on the same topic rather than one long one.
8. Vary tasks types. If possible, provide TPR activities for those who need them.
9. Try and get access to the computer room on a regular basis. Encourage all (clean) computer-use in English, even if this is simply looking up football teams or pop stars. Prepare a webquest on a subject of their choice, or a topic which they are learning in their regular classes.
10. Aim for maximum participation. Find out how students prefer to take part in English lessons.

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MR. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE! STAND UP AND BE COUNTED!

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At the ETAI Conference this past summer I gave an illustrated lecture based on the life of Mr. William Shakespeare. This of course presupposed that this gentleman really had existed four hundred years ago. But what if he hadn't? What if he is just a figment of our collective heat-oppressed imaginations? Have all the numerous doctoral theses and worthy tomes praising the Swan of Avon been written in vain? The time has now arrived in order to tidy up all these loose ends and learn the truth!

Mr. William Shakespeare was a con-man! He didn't write "All the world's a stage," "To be or not to be," "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow" and all the other hundreds of quotations that we are heir to. At least, that's what some allegedly learned men and others have been saying for the past two hundred years. So, if the Bard of Avon, gentle Shakespeare, the Sweet Swan of Avon wasn't the author of 38 plays, 154 sonnets and six long poems, who was?

Since 1785, when James Wilmot, a Warwickshire clergyman first suggested that Sir Francis Bacon was the real author of Macbeth, Hamlet, Henry V and other plays, there has been no shortage of candidates for the honour of actually being England's, if not the world's, greatest playwright. In 'Who Wrote Shakespeare?' John Michell lists 37 writers whose names have been put forward as the writers of these great plays, either singly or in collaboration. Such names include the very well-educated Queen Elizabeth I, who may have written them between fending off her many suitors, putting down Catholic plots, and beating up the Spanish Armada. If she wasn't the dramatist par excellence, then Sir Walter Raleigh must have written them. That is, when he wasn't exploring the Americas four times, bringing tobacco to England, or laying down his cloak for his queen, and later, his life for his King, James I. "Not so!" the feminists have charged. These great plays were written by Anne Whately, who was supposed to have been the real Anne Hathaway, or by the talented and forceful Lady Mary Sidney Herbert, the Countess of Pembroke.

Bacon is Shakespeare

However, none of the above is really considered as a serious contender by the anti-Stratford school. Their strongest challenger for the title is Sir Francis Bacon, the Earl of Verulam, (St. Albans). This devious and self-serving aristocrat's life-span (1561-1626) certainly paralleled that of Shakespeare, while his academic, courtly and judicial background can easily answer the perennial question: How could Shakespeare have known so much about the corridors of power when he was merely the son of a Warwickshire glove-maker, money-lender and wheeler-dealer? And from Stratford? What was Stratford, after all? It was just a small market town a hundred miles away from London, the centre of power and entertainment. Impossible! How would such a country bumpkin have had the knowledge to write about such a variety of characters and scenes as portrayed in Macbeth's Scotland, Hamlet's Denmark, or the ancient Rome of Titus Andronicus, Coriolanus and Julius Caesar?

The idea that Bacon is Shakespeare was first proposed in the 1840s when an American woman, Delia Bacon (no relation) lectured on the similarity between Shakespeare's and Bacon's plays. She suggested that Bacon, together with Raleigh and Edmund Spenser, the poet, were responsible for much of the Shakespearean canon. In 1853, she travelled to England to advance her ideas and remained there for several years; her sojourn was bankrolled by Charles Butler, a wealthy businessman. In 1856 she managed to spend the night in Holy Trinity, the church in Stratford where the Bard is buried, with the idea of exhuming his body from its famous grave. She hoped that she would find conclusive evidence that would prove that Shakespeare was not the famous playwright. Perhaps a combination of clerical gloom and the inscription on the writer's grave:

> *Good friend, for Jesus sake forbeare*
> *To digg the dust encloased heare.*
> *Blest be ye man that spares thes stones,*
> *And curst be he that moves my bones.*

prevented her from carrying out her intentions. As the dawn's early light proudly stole over the crypt, her nerves failed her and she fled the church carrying her lantern, pick and shovel.

However, Delia Bacon didn't give up her mission entirely; in the following year, subsidized by Nathaniel Hawthorne the then US consul in Liverpool, she published the first major anti-Stratfordian book, the Philosophy of the Plays of Shakespeare Unfolded, a huge 675 page unreadable tome. Delia Bacon's book bombed and she went mad. She claimed that she was "the Holy Ghost surrounded by devils" and died soon after in a lunatic asylum. Incidentally, Bacon and Hawthorne were not the only American authors to become involved in the "Who wrote Shakespeare?" battle.

Despite this incongruous beginning, the Baconian school took off and British and American Bacon Societies were founded and supported by Mark Twain and Henry James. (Details of the society may be located at www.info@baconsocietyinc.org). Other writers and scholars turned head-over-heels to prove that Bacon was Shakespeare, including Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence. In 1910 he published Shakespeare is Bacon, and by quoting all sorts of anagrams and nonce words, many from Love's Labour's Lost, he set out to prove his theories. His most extreme example comes from Act V. sc.i, with honorificabilitudinitatiubus, a word which Costard the clown uses in this scene. By transforming this 'word' into the Latin anagram Hi ludi F. Baconis nati tuiti orbis, Durning-Lawrence arrived at: These plays, F. Bacon's offspring, are preserved for the world!!! John Michell also quotes a Mr. Beevor from Bacon's town of St. Alban's who won a hundred guineas for his alternative anagram when he came up with: Abi inivit F. Bacon histrio ludit, meaning Be off, F. Bacon. The actor has entered and is playing. (And you thought you can't have fun with Shakespeare?)

In addition to the above, Durning-Lawrence carried out a meticulous comparison of Bacon's Promus and various Shakespearean plays and found, among others, the following examples to prove that Bacon was Shakespeare.

Every Jack becomes a gentleman. (Richard III)
Every Jack would be a lord. (Promus)

The strings of life began to crack. (King Lear)
At length the string cracks. (Promus)

Fortune governed as the sea is by the moon. (1 Henry IV)
Fortune changes like the moon. (Promus)

Can so young a thorn begin to prick? (Henry VI)
A thorn is gentle when it is young. (Promus)

Both Bacon and Shakespeare used the following lines:

Good wine needs no bush. (Promus & As You Like it)
Thought is free. (Promus & The Tempest)
Make use of thy salt hours. (Promus & Timon of Athens)

However, despite the above, many doubters of the Baconian school began to look elsewhere. They claimed that this philosopher, statesman, scientist and politician must have been too busy to write plays, and besides, he didn't even like the theatre! Bacon even wrote several essays describing Elizabethan drama as a complete and utter waste of time.

Verulam isn't Shakespeare. Oxford is.

Seventy years after Delia Bacon began her quest, a schoolmaster from Gateshead (now famous for its yeshiva) in North East England wrote 'Shakespeare Identified' in 1918. The author with the unfortunate name of J. Thomas Looney (pronounced Loney) took two years to find a publisher who was willing to publish it under the author's real name. In his book, Looney claimed that the real writer of Richard III, Pericles, Twelfth Night et al was none other than Edward de Vere, the 17th. Earl of Oxford. This aristocrat was born 14 years before the Bard but died of the plague in 1604, twelve years before Shakespeare's own demise, possibly on his 52nd. birthday. And there's the rub. For this meant that such great plays as Othello, King Lear, Macbeth, The Tempest and at least eight others would have to have been written well before the dates most modern literary scholars say they were. However, this minor inconvenience did not dismay Looney. He received support from Sigmund Freud, as well as from the British Nobel Laureate, John Galsworthy. Later, Looney's cause was also championed by Orson Welles as well as by the well-known Shakespearean actors, Sir Derek Jacobi, Sir John Gielgud and Charlie Chaplin. Today, the 'Shakespeare Authorship Coalition' has nearly three hundred members.

Despite his belief in his theory, Looney could never explain why the Earl of Oxford hid his identity behind that of Shakespeare's. Was it because being connected with the stage 400 years ago was not considered 'in'? All Looney could say was, "That is his business, not ours."

Oxford isn't Shakespeare. Marlowe is.

The question of dying inconsiderately early also presents the supporters of the 'Christopher Marlowe is Shakespeare' school with a similar problem. Although the writer of Tamburlaine the Great, Doctor Faustus and The Jew of Malta was born in the same year as Shakespeare, Marlowe was stabbed to death on 30 May 1593, 23 years before the Bard's own more peaceful death. Marlowe's tragic demise in Deptford, a seedy part of London, was the result of a pub brawl over who was to pay the bill. The inquest was held within two days and the killer, Ingram Friser, was held for breaching the peace. He was released a month later with a Royal Pardon and continued to serve as an official anti-Catholic agent for the authorities.

Four hundred years later, William (or Wilbur) Ziegler, an American lawyer-cum-novelist suggested in It was

Marlowe: A Story of the Secret of Three Centuries that Marlowe had faked his own death. This would have enabled Thomas Walsingham, his patron and possible lover to hide him somewhere in the south-east of England or in Europe where he could continue to write Macbeth, Hamlet and King Lear '' 'posthumously'.

Ziegler's trail-blazer was followed up sixty years later by Calvin Hoffman, a New York publicist who published The Man who was Shakespeare. Like Delia Bacon, he planned to open the writer's coffin and was in fact somewhat more successful. He managed to open the tomb at the Walsingham family vault at Chislehurst, Kent, but all he found was a coffinful of sand! He was not allowed to open any more and so Marlowe continues to lie buried undisturbed in St. Nicholas' churchyard, Deptford. (See www.marlowe-society.org)

As John Michell notes, of all the claimants to the Shakespearean crown, Marlowe's is the strongest. Unlike the Earls of Verulam, Oxford as well as those of Rutland, Derby, Essex, Southampton, Salisbury, Devon and Stirling (see jacket of Mitchell's book), Marlowe was a professional and proven playwright. Like the Bard, he had studied the Classics, was familiar with Ovid and his contemporaries, and his plays were published and produced under his own name. As an example of how serious this claim is, the Marlovians have even persuaded the Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey to install a memorial window in the Poets' Corner. This includes a question-mark by the date of his alleged death.

My personal opinion

It is often important and relevant to know something of a writer's, artist's or musician's life in order to understand his or her work. Such knowledge often helps us to see why this person produced a particular work. Why are Siegfried Sassoon's WW1 poems so different from his later work? How can we understand the difference between Goya's early courtly paintings and his later grim wartime sketches? How much did Beethoven's deafness affect the composing of his later symphonies and concertos?

However, when it comes to Shakespeare, I don't think it really matters if the plays were written by the son of a country artisan and small-time crook or if they were written by a rich aristocrat who wished to conceal his identity for reasons of social status. What is important is the writing itself. Shakespeare's plays are so good that they can, and do, stand up for themselves. They have been doing this for over four hundred years. If they are still being read, studied, staged, filmed and most importantly, enjoyed four centuries after they were written by the Bard of Avon or some other person (or persons), then that is quite enough for me. As Shakespeare himself wrote: **The play's the thing.**

I would be very interested to hear other teachers' opinions on this subject! If you'd like to respond please email me, post to the ETNI discussion list or submit a letter to the editors of the ETAI Forum.

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KNOW YOUR SCHOOL – IMPROVE YOUR SCHOOL

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For teachers in schools in the UK, few acronyms are more feared than "OFSTED" – the Office for Standards in Education. Every three years, every school in the country is subjected to an inspection from Ofsted, with the results distributed to parents and published on the Ofsted website.

Since schools understandably, in order to get the best possible inspection report, tend to demonstrate and perfect those areas of teaching and learning that Ofsted claims to value highly, the theoreticians of the inspection service have been able to significantly influence the strategic development of education. In many cases this has had a negative effect and, arguably, sometimes even disastrous. However, in 2005, the latest version of "the Ofsted Framework" marked a new and positive direction for both schools and inspectors – school self-evaluation.

Simply put, Ofsted's message to schools was; "from now on we are not going to evaluate you. We want you to evaluate yourselves, and then we will come and see how well you've done that". Rather than merely "getting schools to inspect themselves, and saving Ofsted from having to do it" as some cynically thought at first, this new approach was building on research from the previous decade, that concluded that self-evaluation was the key to school improvement, and that, in turn, a culture of continual school improvement was the key to enhancing educational outcomes for children.

Self-evaluation, however, is not the same as internal inspection. Inspection is a one-off event conducted annually or every few years; Self-evaluation is an ongoing, continual process and should be embedded in the culture of the school. Inspection is intended for an external audience; self-evaluation is designed for an internal readership – the school community itself and primarily the staff and leadership. The school's interest in the inspection process is to look good; the purpose of self-evaluation is to improve.

If staff do not feel part of the self-evaluation process then they will not feel ownership of its conclusions nor, crucially of the improvement strategy that results. The mountain of well-intentioned development plans that were never fully or even partially actualised with which so many schools are familiar is the consequence.

Therefore it is essential that the staff have some sense of ownership of the process and that self-evaluation is not just a "top-down" exercise by the Principal and senior team. One model is to form a "Self-Evaluation group" representing all staff at all levels of the school, to design and manage the self-evaluation process. A simpler, and more traditional, arrangement is for the senior team to lead the self-evaluation, but to ensure that other staff are consulted and included as much as possible at every stage of the journey.

So, what is the Self-Evaluation process? No model works for every school and, indeed, in light of the above observation, every school must develop a system that works with, and for, them. But any effective evaluation must be able to produce answers to the following three questions:

1. How good is our school?
2. How do we know?
3. What can we do to improve?

I would suggest that following seven-stage process.

1. What do we want to measure?

The first stage is to decide what is important for our school – what are our success criteria by which we can know if we are doing "well". If the school does not have a clear set of objectives, perhaps outlined in a mission statement, then now is the time to establish one. Just as the students need objectives to know if they have achieved, so does a school.

The school's mission will reflect the culture and beliefs of the school. Some schools will include character development; a school with a religious ethos will include the inculcation of that set of beliefs and attitudes amongst its aims. Some schools will emphasise that it expects its students to play a role in their local and wider community. One would expect that all schools should have effective teaching and learning as one of its aims.

Having determined the school's objectives, the next task is to choose a number of foci for the self-evaluation. Since evaluation is an ongoing process, not everything has to be examined at once. Some aspects of the school's performance can be reviewed continually – such as the quality of teaching and learning, and others, such as particular departments, could be evaluated on a rolling programme of, for example, two departments per year. However, the school should determine a time-frame in which the success, or

otherwise, of meeting all the school's objectives will be assessed.

2. **How are we going to measure them?**

   The importance of ensuring the stage one precedes stage two cannot be over-stated. Too often schools, parents, education departments and indeed everybody determines what is measurable, and declares that to be important, rather than choosing what is important, and then measuring it. Merely because exam results are easy to quantify and compare, does not mean that they are the most important thing to measure (though indeed they may be).

   Therefore, once the school leadership, and whomever else they are involving in the process have determined against which objectives they believe it important to evaluate the school's progress, they then have to decide on the means by which progress towards these objectives will be measured.

   Again, this will vary considerably from school to school. But in every school, classroom observations by peers and by senior staff can be a major element in measuring the quality of teaching and learning. Many teachers feel threatened by observations, but if it is part of a clear process which includes support and development for all teachers, there is no reason why they should be. Teachers should not be reluctant to open their good practice to others for observation and sharing; and poor practice should be opened so that help and support can be given.

   Exam results are usually a crucial part of measuring a school's progress as long as all stakeholders understand that they are no more, and no less, than a snapshot. They can be compared to results from other departments, from similar schools, from previous cohorts and from the same cohort in previous years, to give a clear picture of progress, as well as results from one occasion.

   An examination of children's work gives a good indication of the standards that they are reaching, as well as the effectiveness of the feedback with which teachers annotate the work. Parental surveys enable the school leadership to understand how their "clients" judge the effectiveness of the school in areas such as academic standards, behaviour, the general contentment of their children at school and communication with staff.

   Naturally the views of the children themselves is a very useful indicator of the performance of the school. Either by consulting with a "student representative council", or student surveys or focus groups, or a combination of all three, the school can gauge how the students see their own opportunities for learning and what are the barriers that the children themselves see as hindering their progress. Student surveys can give vital insights to staff as to how safe children consider themselves at school, and can even pinpoint areas of the school environment where they feel less secure, and more vulnerable to threats such as bullying.

3. **Carry out the self-evaluation, using the strategies determined in stage 2**

4. **Analyse the results**

   It is not enough to acquire reams of result in statistical, or other, forms. The results should be analysed with a view to answering the questions: "What does this information tell us about how well we are doing?" and "Where do we need to improve?"

   Time needs to be spent using the results to identify the areas needed for improvement, and, precisely what needs to be changed. Targets for improvement can be set – e,g. "we have 70% satisfaction by parents in this area – within two years we want that to improve to 90%", or a particular degree of improvement in exam results in English.

5. **Prepare an Action Plan for Improvement**

   Although each step of the self-evaluation process is crucial, perhaps this stage is the most significant of all. Self-evaluation without improvement is of almost no use. The information-gathering stage must lead to a specific plan for action, with a short-term (e.g. one term), medium-term (e.g. one year) and long-term framework (e.g. three years). One cannot improve all aspects of a school at once; for that reason it is sensible to choose some areas for this year but to plan to address other areas in the following years. Action plans need to specify dates for each stage to be completed and how it's success can be determined; who in the school is responsible for leading and to whom they report; and resources, in time or money, that are needed so that this can be incorporated into the school's overall budget.

6. **Share the evaluation and the Action Plan with the school community**

   In order for the whole school community – parents, the school board, students and especially the teachers – to feel ownership of, and involvement with, the improvement process, the school leadership must be prepared to share the results

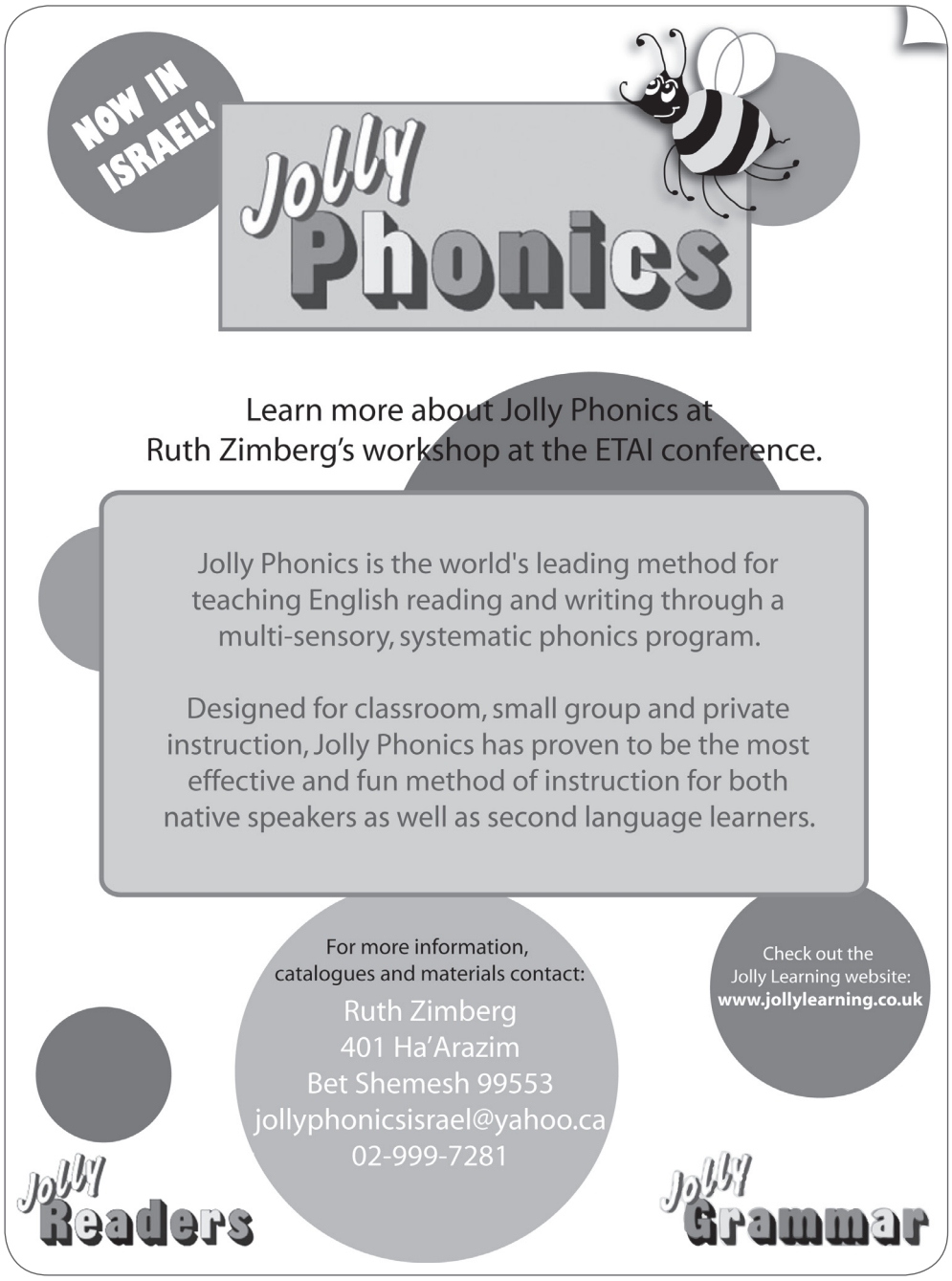
of the evaluation. An appropriate model may be a detailed presentation and analysis to staff, and a briefer letter to parents that sets out "what we are doing well", "what we need to improve" and "this is how we plan to improve". Such communication shows all parties that the school is dedicated to improvement, thus raising confidence in the school and its achievements. It also, naturally makes the school accountable to deliver on its Action Plan.

7. Start all over again

As I have tried to make clear, Self-evaluation and School improvement should not be a one-off event, but should become part of the culture of the school. Therefore, it never finishes; a school that stops striving to improve is a school that enters into a spiral of decline. The formal self-evaluation –action plan-implementation of action plan cycle should take place each year or so, but the more informal effort to evaluate all of the school activities, at every level, should be embedded into all practice.

It may seem depressing to know that the task never ends, but in practice it is the opposite; to be part of a school that is committed to ongoing evaluation and improving is exciting and enthusing. Enjoy the ride!

Rabbi James Kennard is the Principal, Mount Scopus Memorial College, Melbourne, Australia. He was a keynote speaker at the ETAI 2007 Summer Conference in Jerusalem.



READING IN THE CLASSROOM

Elinor Karsagi *elinor2412@yahoo.com*

I was driven to depths of despondency. My pupils were getting the best of me, pulling the wool over my eyes. The conventional book report (read a book by October 10th and hand in a written assignment) enabled pupils to download and hand in ready made book reports, no matter how creatively versed the assignment, read a book in Hebrew or even base their assignment on the movie version of the book. Overly sophisticated vocabulary or misspelled names of characters (Feebie, for example) aroused my suspicions.

Inspired by Judy Steiner's 1995 article on Reading For Pleasure, (www.anglit.net) I began to feel that if pupils read in class, at least part of the time, at least I knew that they had the book. In her article, Steiner stresses that pupils should be allowed to read what they want with the aim of getting them "hooked on books". Reading for pleasure leads to an involuntary acquisition of language skills, should be done both at home and in the classroom for at least 20 minutes a week and should be modeled by the teacher. A variety of fun tasks act as motivation for reading or as a trigger for oral interaction. Pupils should not be tested on recall of content.

The next stage in the development of my own program was my exposure to the article "Writing One's Way into Reading" by Vivian Zamel (1). Zamel writes that pupils have been put off reading because they have come to see the conventional reading assignments as re-presenting the 'right set of ideas' or 'correct interpretation' and distrust their own ability to get it right. Zamel believes that reading can only have meaning if readers interact with the text, involving their own history, personality and so forth. Instead of seeing writing as the end product of reading, she suggests that writing be a pre-reading or while-reading experience or as a reflection after reading. As soon as pupils are encouraged to write about what they read, they are interacting with the text, giving it their own meaning. People understand the text by responding, working out their opinions while writing. Haven't you ever felt that you don't know what you think or feel until you start to write about it?

I put all this theory into practice in two different kinds of reading programs. In one, pupils choose their own books and in the other, the entire class reads the same book. In both cases the assignments are designed as a **vehicle** to get the pupils involved in their books. There is no right or wrong answer, but that any opinion or reflection must be backed up by something that they read in the book. I believe that the sample projects that I have to offer can be adapted to almost any grade and level.

The Six Week Reading Project.

This is the program where the pupils choose their reading books. There are six assignments, of which five are done in class after 20-25 minutes of silent reading. If a pupil prefers to continue reading and do the assignment at home, the assignment must be handed in before the next reading session. The final assignment is done at home. I collect and check each assignment every week. (Pupils may or may not correct and improve their assignments before handing in the final project.) The weekly assignments are short,about half a folio page, so they are not too difficult to check. I do not grade each weekly assignment, only the final project. I do, however, endeavor to write comments on each assignment. Here are some examples of the assignments I give. Certain assignments refer to topics previously learned in class.

Week I Introduction

Write the name of the story and the author. What genre is the story? Copy 2-3 lines from the first 5-10 pages of the book that reflect the genre. Copy another 2-3 lines that you feel contain a hint or indication of what is to follow. Explain your choice, saying what, in your opinion, these lines predict.

Or

How did you choose this book? What is your first impression from the book? Do you think you are going to like it? If so, why, and if not, why not?

Or

Read the first ten pages. Copy a short passage (3-4 lines) that you liked, or moved you, interested you or annoyed you or made you laugh. Explain in 2-3 sentences why you chose this passage and how it made you feel.

Week II Description

Copy a passage in which the author describes a person or a scene. Underline the adjectives and adverbs. Who or what do they describe? Find 2-3 examples of information that the author conveyed by thier use of descriptive language. For example:

It was a lovely day. The sun was shining.

She is a generous person. She always shares whatever she has.

Or

Copy 3-4 lines that describe a place. Which words help you to imagine what it looks like? Make a drawing and add two more descriptive sentences from your imagination.

Week III Characters

Choose one character and describe him/her in 3-4

sentences (appearance and personality). What is her/his role in the story? Interview the character in five sets of questions and answers.

Or

Choose one character and describe him or her in 3-4 sentences. Discuss their appearance and personality. Write a short diary entry for one of the other characters relating to their feelings toward the character you have described.

Or

Write an imaginary dialogue between two characters in the story who are discussing something that happened in the story. Present the characters and the situation in about four sentences before you write the dialogue.

Weeks IV & V Miscellaneous

Choose one event from the story and write about it in the form of a newspaper article. Don't forget to include the headline, relevant details and comments from someone who was there.

Or

Describe a problem, conflict or turning point in the story. How was it resolved? Who was involved? How, in your opinion, could it have been different?

Or

Write a letter to the author. Say what you liked and didn't like. Ask the author about something unclear or not mentioned in the story.

Or

You are an actor. Write to a director who is considering making a movie about the story. Tell them which character you would like to play and why you think you are suitable for the part. Ask the director 2-3 questions about their plans for the movie.

Or

How does the story end? Did it match your expectations? How did you feel at the end? Explain. Suggest an alternative ending.

Week VI The Final Project.

Create an ORIGINAL front and back cover for the book. On the back you must write either a blurb, or a recommendation or "quotes" from reviews of the book.

I have found this project to be popular with the pupils. Some like it because there is a lot of freedom of choice and expression. Others like it because each assignment is short and they have the opportunity to correct and improve if they wish. I have been pleasantly surprised by some of the work I have received.

These ideas are adaptable to the level and material taught in class. In the weekly assignment you can integrate language points learned, such as conditionals, adjectives and adverbs, modal perfect and so on. They also provide an opportunity to reinforce metaphors and similes, as well as letter writing. For weaker pupils, more emphasis could be placed on vocabulary building. These assignments must be given as part of a process while the pupils are reading their books in class and are designed to cause the pupils to read with a particular aim in mind.

The Set Book Project

Sometimes we prefer to choose the pupils' reading material. In cases where the school is able to buy a set of books, the whole class can read a certain book together. I am not referring to the novels we tend to read with English speakers, but simplified readers such as Tom Sawyer and Round the World in Eighty Days.

For each of these two books, for example, I have created a booklet (2) of exercises which pupils work on in class. This activity lends itself to pair and group work. Depending on the level, I either read each chapter to the class or they read alone or to each other. I created a variety of exercises either for every chapter or two chapters so that the whole project lasts 6-8 lessons. Here are some examples of the types of tasks offered:

Matching: Name of character to personality trait.
Quotes: Who said it to whom and why?
Sentence completion, with or without word bank.
Tables: cause and effect or problem and solution, with or without bank,
Creative writing based on a specific chapter: diary of character or newspaper report.
True or False: identifying sentences from the text with or without minor changes.

As in the six week project, the aim of these exercises is not to test but rather to provide the pupils with a reason to read. The emphasis is on process rather than product. Obviously the product is graded, but a large percentage of the grade, as outlined in the rubric, may include effort, creativity and cooperation.

My former frustration is now a thing of the past, and my pupils and I approach the fulfillment of the extensive reading requirement with both joy and anticipation.

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Steiner, Judy. (1995) Reading for Pleasure. Retrieved August 20, 2007 http://www.anglit.net/main/bulletin/October 2004/index.html

Zamel, Vivian. (1992) Writing One's Way into Reading. TESOL Quarterly. 26.3, 463-85.

Notes

1. Thanks to Shai Aran for referring me to Zamel's article.
2. If you are interesting in receiving a sample booklet for either of the readers mentioned, please contact me at: elinor2412@yahoo.com

Elinor Karsagi made aliyah from the UK in 1977. She teaches junior high and high school in Tali Beit Hinuch in Jerusalem and has been there since 1981.

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PRE-PROJECT AND PROJECT PREPARATION SUGGESTIONS

Shelly Ganiel *ganielshelly@gmail.com*

The project ideas presented here are the work of all the team at Yeshiva Tichonit Hispin. I strongly believe in project work and find it offers students a creative and real way to express themselves in English while learning to do research, summarize and write a paper. These are necessary skills that hopefully will transfer over to other areas of learning as well.

Our school has a wonderful computer room with excellent support. However, the room only has 16 computers, which is a problem because many classes have more than 25 students. One solution is to have the students work in pairs. Another way is to have some do work that doesn't require the computer while others are doing research. Several years ago, we decided that we would do the project in the tenth grade. The entire grade would do the same project, but each class has the computer room exclusively for 2 months. We decide among us who will be first, second, etc. During this period the class works only on the project and uses the computer room and library opposite for their work. They report to the classroom at the beginning of the lesson for attendance, general information or messages or special instructions. Then the teacher goes to the computer room/library with the class. While the first class is working on the projects, the rest continue with the regular program. If there is any need for a change or adaptation of the project outline, we all benefit from this first teacher's experience. There is also a special bulletin board near the computer room. The class working at the time on their projects puts up pages of their work. Amazingly, other students actually read and learn from what is up on the board. I highly recommend this. Also, those who have their work on the board (we try to put up something from every student over the two months of work) are extremely proud of their accomplishments – and rightly so,

Because I cannot use the computer room during the tenth grade except for project work, I begin pre-project preparation in the ninth grade. Here are some of the kinds of activities I do with the students Some are in the computer room, others are not.

1. **Writing paragraphs:** I have prepared a series of exercises that teach the student what a paragraph is and how to write one. The basic idea is to explain what an opening sentence is, what supporting sentences do and the reason for a closing sentence. Lower level students work on writing sentences. This usually takes one lesson with homework and review of the homework in the next lesson.
2. **Usinga search engine:** I have written an exercise in which has the students use at least two different search engines. I have a list of about twelve. I want them to learn to use something other than Google and Yahoo. They do not actually have to look for material. They choose a topic from those I listed (names of people, places, etc.) and go to the search engine. Questions include things like: How many sites are there in each search engine for this topic? What is the first site listed? What are differences between the first ten sites in the two search engines? They work in pairs. It is a one lesson exercise.
3. **Writing a short biography:** After doing exercises one and two above, the class is ready for some research and writing. They are given an exercise in which they have to research on the computer using a search engine and then write a paragraph. I give them a list of about twelve famous people. If a student wants a different person, they need to ask in order for me to agree. They have a list of about ten questions about the person. They need to go into the material they find on the Internet, take out the appropriate information and then write it in sentences that form a paragraph. If possible, they include a picture of the person. We put this on a folio-sized piece of colored paper and hang it on our English bulletin board. Questions include things such as: When was he born? Why is he famous? Where did he live? This takes one or two lessons.
4. **Preparing a Bibliography:** I have prepared an exercise teaching the correct way to write a bibliographical reference from books and magazines, newspaper articles, encyclopedias and Internet sites. The students get material written in a few sentences saying where the material came from. They must put this in the correct bibliographical form. This we do together in class. This takes one lesson.

   Example: I used Time magazine from September 3, 2007 for my project. The article was by Bill Smith and called "The Twin Towers Revisited". It was on page 32.
5. **Mini-Project:** If possible, I try to do a mini-project with my ninth grade class. If the class is a lower level, then the teacher will do another task, similar to task 3 above. My favorite one is a project we did several years ago that we found to be a bit too easy for a real project. It's called "The Day I Was Born". The project has several chapters: Personal Statistics, Shared Birthdays, Shared Events, A Shared Event

in Israel and a Summary. We require a cover page, table of contents and bibliography. The students love the topic as it's about them. The site shows you the moon on the day you were born, gives your age not only in years and days but also in minutes and seconds; a 14 year old is millions of seconds old and suddenly feels older. We also use another site (www.scopesystems.com) which lists tens of people who were born, or died on a particular date. It lists events that happened in the world even from before the Common Era. Unfortunately, there is little reference to things that happened in Israel. I allow the students to use one of the books that was published when Israel reached its 50th birthday. There, events are listed by day and they can usually find something appropriate and then translate the material into English, sometimes with some very "creative" translations. This usually takes about 3-4 lessons.

By now, we are at the end of the ninth grade and I feel that my students have the tools to tackle a project in the following year. Our school is a dormitory school; the boys do not go home every week and therefore it is essential that we do the work in school. This is why we use the eight weeks or so allotted to each class for working solely on the project.

6. **Project Work:** Over the past several years we have developed an outline for the project that we feel meets our expectations. We get together in the summer and decide on an appropriate topic for the year. It has to be something that is broad enough to allow each student to choose a topic that will interest him within the framework of the umbrella topic. In the past we did projects on the Olympics, Landmarks and Movies. This year we are working on Careers. The outline has eight chapters: Introduction, Background, Comparison, Personality, Interview, Letter, Summary and Reflections. A cover, table of contents and bibliography are also required. An appendix is extra. Even though 98% of the boys type their work, we give a bonus for a typed paper. Lower level classes write less.

   Project work requires a tremendous amount of work and energy from the teacher. We require first drafts from the students. Some write them out; others type them and e-mail them to me. But in both cases, I have to mark them. I also have to be available to help students find things on the Internet, go over their summarizations, reassure them, and help in every way possible. Our goal is to have 100% of the students finish their projects in the tenth grade. We are close (over 90%) but have not yet reached the goal. We try to encourage them and help them in every way possible, however, the actual writing is their job. We tell them over and over how important a project is. It is 30% of the yearly grade of one module and 60% of the oral exam. Therefore, it is essential that they finish it and get the best possible grade.

   Giving in a first draft and having it corrected (I underline errors and return it) helps them to improve their grade. They are graded using rubrics with the same parameters as those used to mark the Bagrut compositions: content, vocabulary, language and mechanics. This gets them used to the terminology and what is required of them.

   Here are a few words of encouragement to the teachers. It is extremely worthwhile to do project work. It takes the students out of the usual routine and has them working on real material in an important way. It teaches them skills that they will need for all of their future studies. It takes time, energy, unending patience, strength and support from your colleagues and hopefully from your principal as well. We have earned the respect of the other staff members and most important, of the computer people by our hard work, efficiency and willingness to work with computers. Do not be afraid of computers. They are stupid machines. You are the ones with the brains. Show them you are the boss and "fake it" if you're not really sure. I tell the students if I don't know something, but often they think I know everything. Why? Because I personally go home, write the same project they have to do and then catch the bugs and problems that may arise before the students get to them. You can all do this as well. And I am absolutely sure that you will succeed.

   Our staff is always willing to encourage and advise anyone who has questions about project work. We can be contacted at email address: ganielshelly@gmail.com. Please feel free to request any of the materials mentioned in the article.

   Enjoy doing your projects this year!!!

Shelly Ganiel, a mother of six, has a Master's degree and P.D. from Columbia University and an MBA in management and marketing. She taught for many years in Shaked (Sde Eliyahu) kibbutz Regional School. She teaches in Tzemach (Business English / marketing) and full-time in Yeshiva Tichonit Hispin High School in Ramat HaGolan.

She has written books for UPP and Eric Cohen and a number of cookbooks.

BLOGS AS DIDACTIC STRATEGY

An experience beyond language: The use of blogs at
The Six Year Kugel High School in Holon www.kugel.org.il

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I have made the use of computers and the Internet part of my teaching work at **The Six Year Kugel High School in Holon** for quite some time. Indeed, the school favors teaching with New Technologies of Information and Communication. Accordingly, I will be adding the use of blogs this year . While the blogs are intended as enrichment work, they are also meant to encourage more active participation of learners in both learning and creating content (1).

You may be familiar with the term "blog" now, as Batya Medad has published a very good article on the Forum (2) explaining the term and blogging. and you may have heard **"What is a Weblog?"** (Listening Comprehension Test Module E winter 2006). Similarly, you may have seen, read, discussed and, perhaps, created your own blog.

I don't know if my pupils will know how to work, and therefore study and learn, with the blogs. I don't even know if they will be interested enough to use them; this is a question of motivation. In fact, there are many other things I don't know, but I will not let that deter me. And yet, whereas I won't neglect my "usual" English work in class, students will be asked to do carry out tasks that are compatible with the requirements of our time. They will get a bonus if they work well with the blog; work should be rewarded.

Working with blogs at school involves the same elements we use in project work, so I will quote Ora Baumgarten (3) (italicized) who has stated them clearly.

Relevance: Since I will be working with the books, the blogs will be closely connected to our work in class. Equally important, the subjects of the units deal with "*authentic issues, relevant and curriculum based*."

Searching: "*Activities will require investigation as much as description. I aim to get pupils to process information and improve their research and problem solving skills.*" I mean to ask pupils to organize, compare, differentiate, contrast, illustrate, solve, create, analyze, categorize, infer, predict, speculate, conclude, summarize, propose, argue, recommend, evaluate, defend, etc. (LOTS and HOTS). I may not have done all that on the blogs yet, but I hope I'm on the right track.

Ownership: Pupils will be allowed to decide on the topic(s) that they will react to. They will then "take responsibility, assume ownership and build on their previous knowledge. They will also organize their own work and manage their time." I will try "to guide them".

Creativity: Pupils "will use various modes of communication". They will respond in writing, but also be able to post pictures, links, a video, etc. I am sure many pupils can do that, and the others will have an opportunity to learn mostly from their peers.

Sharing: Pupils will "connect by sharing" their posts on the blog. They will also discuss them orally in class.

Effective learning: The selection of topics in the books is "meaningful to the pupils because they affect them" in different ways. I hope to post videos, music, articles, pictures, etc. related to the subjects of each unit. Accordingly, "different learning styles and intelligences are accommodated" in blog work.

Enjoyment: "Pupils learn by doing and not by being passive learners."

"Let's Tour Israel!" is an activity that combines the use of a blog and a miniquest. It is meant for use with both students of English as a Foreign Language and native speakers anywhere in the world. Participants are encouraged to plan a 10-day tour in Israel and present it to the class using a Power Point Presentation / Show. While they work along the lines of a web quest, participants are encouraged to use the blog for communication and presentation purposes. The experience goes beyond language in that it aims at encouraging both a different way to know Israel and tourism in our country, and the use of New Technologies of Information and Communication.

"Let's Tour Israel!" is the English version of **"Viajemos a Israel"**, which I created and put on the net for use with Spanish speakers and students of Spanish as a Foreign Language. This activity has been chosen as innovative experience of August 2007 by Spain's Educared in the Profesores Innovadores section (4). There are some minor differences between the two.

Blogs can be considered a didactic strategy. I favor blogs "for communication, for literacy, for ownership, for sharing, for collaboration, for discussion, for empowerment, for interaction, for motivation, for participation, for engagement, for excitement, for

conversation, for creativity, for reflection, to extend the walls of the classroom, to give students a "voice", to give students an audience, to give students a learning environment (open 24 hours a day), to give them skills useful for digital futures, to write to learn, to blog to learn (5).

Blogging is relatively easy and, no less important, inexpensive. You don't need to be a webmaster to create your own Blog. As a matter of fact, Blogger, one example of an easy to use site, can help you through your work.

Unfortunately, this article is not a Blog, so you can't post your comments, suggestions and reactions here. The ETNI discussion list could be one place where you could, or you may e-mail me. Better yet, share your thoughts by writing a letter to the editors here at the ETAI Forum.

Enjoy blogging!

Sites I use:

EFL Yud Kugel – http://eflyudkugel.blogspot.com/

EFL Yud Aleph Kugel – http://eflyudkugel.blogspot.com/

Let's Tour Israel! – http://letstourisrael.blogspot.com/

Viajemos a Israel – http://viajemosaisrael.blogspot.com/

(1) Read Anat Zohar's **"Pedagogical Horizons for Learning"**, on www.anglit.net I have tried to apply some of the ideas on the blogs.

(2) Batya Medad: "**Teachers blog and Bloggers teach**" ETAI Forum Summer 2006.

(3) Ora Baumgarten: **"A Thousand Words"** – ETAI Forum Summer 2007

(4) http://www.educated.net/ProfesoresInnovadores/experiencias/exp.asp?id=217

(5) Rachel Boy.: http://www.rachel boyd.blogspot.com and http://www.teachertube.com/view_video.php?viewkey=be6ec9b852b0a542e2f3

Do you want to learn more and join edubloggers around the world? Join the following sites:

1. http://edubloggerworld.ning.com/ An international network for educational bloggers and friends. A meeting place, as well as a coordinating location for live face-to-face and virtual events.
2. www.classroom20.com
   The social networking site for those interested in the practical application of computer technology (especially Web 2.0) in the classroom and in their own professional development.
3. http://eflclassroom.ning.com A community of teachers sharing and talking about materials and methods for use in the EFL classroom.

About myself: I am originally from Argentina and have been living in Israel since 1979. I have been teaching English at Kugel High School in Holon since 1989 and Spanish (5 point Bagrut) since 2003. My professional degrees are the following: B.A., MA and Teaching Certificate in EFL - Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Diploma in teaching English for those with Specific Learning Disabilities (Dyslexia) - Bar Ilan University.

Teaching certificate in Spanish as a Foreign Language in the Israeli school system - Israel's Ministry of Education. Member of The British Dyslexia Association.

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PIC-STORIES BY PHYLLIS ODED

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STORY-TIME

First rewrite the story using words only. Then, go on with each story. Do not use any direct quotations. Try to make your story different/interesting. Pay attention to capitalization, punctuation, grammar, spelling and vocabulary.

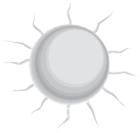
1. "O the door!" ed the ." M going 2 count 2 10.

If U don't o it, U will verE sorrE."

_____

_____

_____

2. " M erd," said the old lad- D 2 her  .

" bed should in?"

_____

_____

_____

3. E y ago, there was 1ce a beautiful princess

who lived in a near a . Every1 loved her.

_____

_____

_____

© Phyllis Oded

EASY STORY-TIME

1 day took m- 2 the park.

M- saw a and ran after the .

The went up a -cause it was afraid of

m- .

It waited for m- dog 2 go away -4 it came

down from the .

Write the story out in words.

Now add two sentences to the story:

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LITERATURE AND HIGHER ORDER THINKING SKILLS: GETTING YOUR FEET WET

Debbie Lifshitz *debbiel@netvision.net.il*

New programs, like the Literature Module for the Bagrut, mean new terminology, and new terminology means we have to learn how to swim all over again. The new module, in keeping with new policies of the Pedagogical Secretariat of the Ministry of Education, seeks to infuse Higher Order Thinking Skills in the disciplines. So instead of jumping in at the deep end, let's get our feet wet in shallow waters. I propose to introduce three literary terms and one Higher Order Thinking Skill in this article, by kicking around in shallow water. The literary terms in order of appearance are: story, plot and order. The Higher Order Thinking Skill is Sequencing, but - as we all know -, we have to start at the very beginning, because it's the best place to start.

Story

E.M. Forster penned novels such as "A Passage to India", "The Painted Veil" and "A Room with A View". He also wrote essays on literary theory. It was Forster who defined two of the terms we will use here, story and plot. According to Forster, a story "is a narrative of events arranged in their time sequence".

Luckily, being a storyteller himself, he also gave an example:

"*The King died **and then** the queen died*".

We are not meant to think that these two events occurred simultaneously. Nor are we meant to understand that they occurred with a vast span of time between them. We are meant to understand that first the King died and then, a short but significant time later, the queen died. This according to Forster is the minimal requirement for a text to be called a story.

Now let's kick some water, by continuing the string of events (which Forster didn't do) and fleshing out our story:

Within a short time, the young Prince was crowned King and his Uncle was appointed Regent. The young Prince, who was now the young King, **then** continued his education **and later**, when he was near matriculation, he chose the Lord Chief Justice as his mentor.

Plot

OK. Now that we understand what story is, what's plot and how is it different from story?

Simple says E.M. Forster. You add another ingredient. This one is called 'causality', which sounds like a mean word but really only introduces the concept of "because". So, how does this change our story? E. M. Forster showed us how to upgrade a story to a plot:

*"The King died and then the Queen died **of grief**"*

So now we know **why** the Queen died so soon after the King. We can rule out epidemics and poisoning. In fact we can rule out everything else, because now we know it was grief that killed her. So now that we have chronology and causality, we can start wading in shallow waters with our original story:

*The king choked **on a fish-bone** and died and then within a few weeks the Queen died **of grief**. The young Prince, in spite of his own grief over the loss of both his parents, prepared for his untimely coronation as the new king. However **because** of his young age, his uncle was appointed Regent and made all the important decisions. The young Prince, now young King, ratified all these decisions **because** he trusted his uncle's integrity and judgment. But as he continued his education, the young King felt he needed to develop his own thinking and decision making abilities, so he appointed the Lord chief justice as his mentor.*

No significant new events have been added here, but there can be no question, I think, that chronology alone (story) is far less interesting than chronology plus causality (plot). Plot gives us the interest in and explanation of the connection between events.

True, some theoreticians do not like Forster's definitions, and others have different terms, but as Forster's definitions are quite clear and useful, I propose that we adopt them and continue using them in TESOL.

Order

So if we have 'story' and 'plot' why do we need 'order'? Well, here we will use the definition of someone else, Gerard Genette, to help out. Gerard Genette is a French theoretician who has written extensively on narratology. What narration can do is to decide **in what order** to tell the story events, and that becomes very interesting, because instead of just telling the story in a straightforward kind of way, we can take the events and scramble them. For example, we don't have to start at the beginning. Much more sophisticated and much more fun, yet underneath it all, the story and plot are still the same. Let's go for a short swim:

Although the young King was near matriculation level in his studies, he felt some trepidation at the upcoming meeting with Lord Chief Justice. He had been the one who had requested the meeting,

but felt apprehensive, nonetheless. He was feeling increasingly uncomfortable with the situation that had evolved and felt that he needed outside help. He had been very young when both his parents died within a short time of each other. The king, his father, had choked to death on a fish-bone and the queen had died of grief a few weeks later. It was immediately apparent to all that the young king was really too young to make decisions about matters of State, so his uncle had been appointed Regent. The young Prince, coronated barely two months after his parents died, had always trusted his uncle's integrity and judgment, and had always ratified his decisions. But, he had never tested his own thinking in State matters, and felt that he should start soon. He had therefore decided to request that the Lord Chief Justice become his mentor, and had sent for him, hoping that he would accept the position.

The events are the same, the causes are the same, but the '**order** of the events in the story' is very different. Let's see what some of those differences are:

- The events of the 'story' (chronology) have been scrambled.
- A bit of suspense has been added to the neutral mood (why the trepidation and apprehension? Why is he 'uncomfortable'? Why does he need 'outside help'?)
- The point of view has changed, too. We are looking at the whole story from the point of view of the prince (rather than the distant, all-knowing, all-seeing point of view of omniscient narration) and all the events are filtered through his mind and memory.

So although the underlying story and plot are the same we have really told a very different tale.

Sequencing

We're now ready to move from literary terms to Thinking Skills. There are two kinds of thinking skills, Lower Order Thinking Skills and Higher Order thinking Skills, known as LOTS and HOTS respectively. Sequencing appears in both.

Sequencing in LOTS

LOTS monitor basic understanding. In Literature this consists of being able to answer wh-questions (who, what, where, when), of being familiar with the vocabulary of the text and being able to **follow the sequence of events** in a **story**. Think of Fairy Tales, Fables, and Legends. As a general rule, these are tales with straightforward chronological structures. Let's dive in with one of Aesop's Fables.

The Ant and the Dove

An ant went to the bank of a river to quench its thirst, but it fell into the river and was carried away by the rushing water. A dove sitting on the branch of a tree saw that the ant was on the point of drowning, so she plucked a leaf and let it fall close to the ant so she could climb onto it. Shortly afterwards, a bird catcher came and began to set a trap beneath the tree where the dove sat on a branch. The ant, watching the bird catcher, stung him on the foot. The bird catcher was so surprised by the sting that he threw the trap down and the dove, alerted to the danger by the noise, flew away.

Moral: One good turn deserves another

In terms of reconstructing the **sequence of events** we can easily leave out everything except the agents (actors) and their actions.

Ant	goes to river
Ant	falls into river
Ant	almost drowns
Dove	throws a leaf near the Ant
Birdcatcher	begins to set trap for Dove
Ant	stings Birdcatcher
Birdcacher	drops trap
Dove	flies away

As we can now see, reconstructing the sequence of events is a close retelling of the story. It requires an understanding of the events and demands leaving out details that are not themselves events. But nothing more is required than understanding the sequence of events. It is unnecessary to manipulate these details in any way.

Sequencing in HOTS

Now let's go back to that third version of our original tale about the orphaned prince:

Although the young King was near matriculation level in his studies, he felt some trepidation at the upcoming meeting with Lord Chief Justice. He had been the one who had requested the meeting, but felt apprehensive, nonetheless. He was feeling increasingly uncomfortable with the situation that had evolved and felt that he needed outside help. He had been very young when both his parents died within a short time of each other. The king, his father, had choked to death on a fish-bone and the queen had died of grief a few weeks later. It was immediately apparent to all that the young king was really too young to make decisions about matters of State, so his uncle had been appointed

Regent. The young Prince, coronated barely two months after his parents died, had always trusted his uncle's integrity and judgment, and had always ratified his decisions. But, he had never tested his own thinking in State matters, and felt that he should start soon. He had therefore decided to request that the Lord Chief Justice become his mentor, and had sent for him, hoping that he would accept the position.

The narrative presentation here is not chronological. Nor does it need to be as it reflects the mentality and point of view of the young prince. Since the chronology of this text is messy, re-creating the original sequence of events is no longer a Lower Order Thinking Skill. Sequencing the events on a time-line, for example, from the death of the king-father to the apprehensively waiting prince-king, demands the ability to abstract events – minus the causality and affect (feelings), and re-set them in chronological order. In this case what we would get is something close to our original story when we were just kicking water.

Many complex narratives demand precisely this kind of re-construction of chronology—something we usually do automatically, but which at times makes us too stop and go back to re-situate an event. At the farthest end the chronology becomes complex in the extreme. Certain famous novels such as Les Miserables (Victor Hugo) do not give us all the background information at the beginning. It takes a while to find out the Jean Valjean's first crime was to steal a loaf of bread to feed his sister's starving children, and his second crime was trying to escape. Another famous novel is Tristram Shandy (Laurence Sterne) which covers events from 1680 through to 1766, but most of which is narrated in a very convoluted way, completely obscuring the chronology. A third example is The Sound and the Fury (William Faulkner), which has several narrators some of whom recount the same events, each from their own perspective. The events narrated span 1898 to 1928, but are not narrated in sequence. This is especially so in the section containing the voice of Benjy who is an idiot and has no sense of time. The chronological displacements in these novels requires the reader to pay close attention and to reconstruct the chronology from information pieced together from different parts of the novel.

Saki (H.H. Munro) in his very short story "The Open Window", has one character, Vera, relating events that happened three years previously. It turns out that these events are completely fictitious, but it is not merely the nervous young protagonist who has been duped. Savvy readers too, until they catch the humor, readily believe Vera's story, knowing that tales can and do displace events and readers are not surprised when this in fact occurs in the text. Saki then, plays on the reader's expectations of how we tell stories to undermine our credulity.

In all these instances the reader first needs to understand the narrative and only then can s/he go about Sequencing the events. This is the Higher Order Thinking Skill of Sequencing.

To recapitulate we have discussed the following terms:

- Story – a narrative of events arranged in their time sequence
- Plot – a narrative of chronological events connected by causality
- Order – the order in which the events of the story are presented in the narrative (text).
- We also discussed a Lower and Higher Order Thinking Skill:
- LOTS – Sequencing – identifying and listing the chronological events of a story
- HOTS – Sequencing – Abstracting chronological events from a complex text in which the order of events is scrambled.

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Debbie Lifschitz is a lecturer at Michlalah Jerusalem College and is National Coordinator of the new Literature F Bagrut Module.

TEACHING THE CONFLICTS IN LITERATURE BY ACKNOWLEDGING YOUR OWN CONFLICTS

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Two of the approaches mentioned in the new literature curriculum seem, prima facie, to be contradictory. In the first, reader response criticism, the teacher is asked to encourage the students' personal responses to the texts. Many teachers, of course, have always been happy to encourage any oral expression in English. Let's mark out this approach as one end of a spectrum. The teacher is careful not to denigrate any reply, assuming that everyone is entitled to a self-generated interpretation. Making clear that virtually any opinion will be entertained allows students to develop their spoken language skills without fear of giving the "wrong" answer.

The new guidelines suggest as a second approach, cultural historical literary study, which seems to stand at the opposite end of the spectrum. Attention to the cultural contexts of literary texts is meant to "expand the horizons" of the students beyond their own responses and to broaden their understanding of cultural and historical periods and places other than their own. This approach emphasizes the distance between readers and texts, promising that literary texts can, when understood within their original contexts, give us experiences otherwise unavailable, taking us away from our familiar lives. Achieving this goal requires studying some historical information precisely because it is foreign to the students. We're quite far, here, from personal interpretation – from a focus on how reading the text feels to the reader. The implications for classroom activity are that not "everything goes." And there's homework: students may be asked to read other texts from the same place and time, or do some research into the contexts of the texts they're reading. In this approach there will be right and wrong answers.

The approach I want to suggest – the approach I take as a teacher at Bar-Ilan in our Teaching the Conflicts Program – is a third approach. It incorporates parts of both, but is different from either. In order to set out this third but not middle approach, I have to make clear that "teaching the conflicts" requires a different view of what literature is and what it does – a view that undermines the assumptions of both the methods of teaching described above.

Literature, as I understand it, isn't only what I personally make of it. Although of course everyone has a personal reaction to a text, if it's worth the bother, what I gain from my reading won't fit in easily with what I already know. A valuable text will demand I make room for it in my world. Nor would I agree that a text "reflects" the cultural contexts of its origins. Just as it is not a mirror of my own concerns, it isn't and never was a mirror of its author's life and times. Literature is not inert, it is not silent – it has a voice and speaks up. A story elbows its way in – takes the floor, has something to say. Its narrative can never be only a history, a record of events, real or fictional. It is the nature of narrative to display conflicts and possibilities, and to have opinions about them. Our valued texts jump into cultural conflicts; step up to discuss, to negotiate, to clarify. In fact, they don't always clarify, but they certainly get into the argument.

"Demanding," "Elbowing in," "taking the floor," "jumping in" – you can see that I'm talking about conflict. A reflective mirror is not the right metaphor for the boisterous activity, for the belligerence or aggression of some of our best narrative texts. I understand literature as something that acts in the world; it has work to do in areas of conflict, and that's why I'm so happy to have it returning to the curriculum. It has a lot of work to do in Israel, and that's because we are an active people, and we and our students have to deal with aggression and belligerence all our lives. We'll get back to this, but first I want to situate and defend my claim that literature acts in the world.

Let's begin with an anthropological situation of great interest: story telling is a human universal, like eating and mating. I don't distinguish here between fiction and history, songs, novels, plays, poetry, or films. Any form that tells or even implies a narrative fits into the category of story-telling. Why is there is no culture that doesn't tell stories? Story telling, it is argued, helps people organize the chaotic world around them. It structures the swirling present by ordering, hierarchicalizing, assigning value. We need to understand what our choices are, and to be able to predict the outcomes of different actions. We need to know why we should prefer one outcome over the other, before we can choose. All people and most animals need to be able to see or imagine alternatives in order to make choices that are best for themselves, whether the choice is what to eat, or whom to marry. Narratives display or imply choices, agency, and active decision making. They put us through the

paces, giving us practice in making decisions. So forget mirrors, and reflections; literature acts so that we can act. Great literature also makes clear that these choices are never easy. On this view, then, of literature as active in our lives, let's take another look at James Joyce's "Eveline." From the standard view of "culture and context" that the new program asks us to consider, I suppose we'd all agree that Joyce judged Eveline's last minute decision not to go with Frank as mistaken. Certainly that's the way it's normally taught in Israeli classrooms. She misses her chance to get out of her stifling life. The text itself supports this reading: her life is "dusty" like the cretonne curtains, and perhaps fading, like her promise to her dying mother. Her father is stingy and inconsiderate if not actually violent, while everything about Frank, including his name, seems promising.

This interpretation comes from the way we answer the standard contextual question: how did Joyce intend us to understand Eveline's refusal to board the ship with Frank? Besides the hints in the story itself, we may infer Joyce's criticism of Eveline's choice from his having left Ireland to live in Paris, convinced that he couldn't live and write honestly in small-minded bourgeois Dublin. This expansion from text to biography seems to close the case: he must have felt that Eveline's refusal was a foolish, even a tragic mistake.

Now let's ask a second contextual question, but the context is now ours. Who put Joyce's Eveline in the English curriculum, when, and for what reason? My informal snooping revealed that the familiar reading list was decided in the early 70s, and this story was chosen in sympathy with the inferences attributed to Joyce. It was assumed that adolescents would sympathize with a young woman feeling oppressed by being tied to her home and its onerous responsibilities, and thus would think it a tragedy that she didn't run off with Frank, despite her father's prohibition. My source, Pnina Rosenblit, an experienced English teacher, and herself a member of the curriculum committee when the decision was made, cannot confirm that this idea was conscious, but she didn't object to it either. Indeed, the value of independence from the bourgeois constraints of an older generation is so central a theme of Israeli Zionist identity that it goes without saying.

Here's a third frame – suggested to me by another experienced teacher, Joyce Fisch, who taught the story years ago in a religious school. Her female students were not at all sure that Eveline hadn't done the right thing, and the boys were sure it was the Catholic Church that had forced her to stay. Joyce then had to cope with two new contexts in addition to that of early 20th century Dublin: the religious students' own understanding of duty, and their ignorance of the teachings of the Catholic Church. As for the second, she saw an opportunity not to be missed to repair a gap in her students' education, and set about correcting some misunderstandings about the Catholic Church, and comparing certain of its views to Judaism. But the sympathy her female students expressed towards Eveline – their refusal to agree that she had made a mistake – was harder to cope with, since it seemed clearly to challenge Joyce's own judgment. For us, however, it opens up the exciting possibility of self-assertion: not Eveline's, but the readers'. What happens if we decide to disagree with what we assume Joyce wanted us to conclude?

Let's expand this hint and let another context into our discussion – our own context, and by "our" I really mean we English teachers in Israel. You don't need to be a young religious high-school girl to have grounds to resist Joyce's carrying his readers off into a sea of dreams. What do you make of Eveline's dreams as you read this story?

> "She was about to explore another life with Frank. Frank was very kind, manly, open-hearted. She was to go away with him by the night-boat to be his wife and to live with him in Buenos Ayres where he had a home waiting for her….People knew that they were courting and, when he sang about the lass that loves a sailor, she always felt pleasantly confused. He used to call her Poppens out of fun…. He had tales of distant countries…. He told her the names of the ships he had been on and the names of the different services. He had sailed through the Straits of Magellan and he told her stories of the terrible Patagonians. He had fallen on his feet in Buenos Ayres, he said, and had come over to the old country just for a holiday. Of course, her father had found out the affair and had forbidden her to have anything to say to him….
>
> She stood up in a sudden impulse of terror. Escape! She must escape! Frank would save her. He would give her life, perhaps love, too. But she wanted to live. Why should she be unhappy? She had a right to happiness. Frank would take her in his arms, fold her in his arms. *He would save her*." (my italics)

I don't think you have to be an overprotective religious mother to suspect that this view is a bit delusional. But here's the interesting part: Joyce himself suggests it. When she stands on the pier looking at the sea and thinks about Frank:

> "All the seas of the world tumbled about her heart. He was drawing her into them: **He would drown her**."

Note the rhetorical parallel. Would he save her or drown her? Joyce has been subtler than I've so far given him credit for. He has suggested two conflicting but equally potent possibilities. But we're not finished evoking contexts. Am I the only one who has had to cope with caring for aging parents – sometimes with sweet memories, but also with difficulties? And further – are any of you immigrants? Has it always been easy? Have you ever felt misunderstood and unappreciated? Do you remember the organ-grinder in Joyce's story?

She remembered the last night of her mother's illness….outside she heard a melancholy air of Italy. The organ-player had been ordered to go away and given sixpence. She remembered her father strutting back into the sick-room saying:

'Damned Italians! coming over here!'

Had Joyce included this detail to remind us that the life of an immigrant without her family, her sailor husband away, might not be so happy? Might he not indeed drown her? Joyce's story prompts us to ask an extremely contemporary question: is marriage an absolute good? Is following a man and what he thinks is good always what a woman needs? I am not claiming that Joyce intended this particular question. He may or may not have. I am claiming, however, that it is entirely possible from the words of the story itself to see the point of view of a woman who would rather do her duty and manage her own life than be drowned by a young man who we may suspect may have come home to bring back a housekeeper. And why should we not entertain both views? Maybe the air is Buenos Aires is not "good" air, but "hot" air!!

What we can see, once we allow our own perspectives to enter as "context" – and why not? – is that Joyce's text itself gives us the threads by which to unravel the first reading of the story. This is why it's great literature: because it shows us, after we discover the conflict within the text, how really hard Eveline's choice was. It's too easy to just condemn her as passing up a good opportunity. To do so makes light of a serious and really unsolvable conflict. Why force a choice of a reading, when the whole point is that there is a conflict in which any choice of action is difficult.

In the classroom this approach can produce some of the advantages of the "reader response" approach. If current contexts count, then the teacher has to stand back and let the students make the first moves – preferably on paper – before hearing either the teacher's or the other students' reactions. Having encouraged "response," the teacher now has to be quiet and work hard. The teacher has to listen carefully, not accepting anything, and not jumping in to correct, but gauging just why the student had the reaction he or she did, and how that student can be brought to see the other side of the story – to actually feel the conflict in the story. This will involve both helping them understand the historical contexts of the text and the bearing their own contexts have on its meaning. The teacher's goal is to legitimize the students' own concerns, but also bring them to inhabit other positions – to recognize that life puts people in hard places. You want them to feel the conflict, as did Eveline, not just condemn or approve. You might want to ask the students to add a scene: say, one in which Frank talks to his Irish relations about his life in Buenos Aires, explaining to them why he wants to bring Eveline back with him. What would be implied by his not telling them of his intentions toward Eveline? They might be asked to write a soliloquy in which he explains to himself why he hasn't yet told her he loves her. They might be asked to write the letter Eveline sends her younger brothers 5 years later from Buenos Aires.

Our focus in the Teaching the Conflicts Program is to learn how to negotiate between the contexts of literature and the contexts of our current reading of literature. We believe that literature teaches this crucial "higher order skill:" being able to take two different positions oneself, and being aware that others can reasonably inhabit other positions than your own. I don't need to tell you how important this is in Israel.

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CLASS SEMINAR, BEER SHEVA, JULY 2007

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We left our spouses, our children, our daily commitments behind. Imagine 25 people from all sectors of the Israeli population: men, women, religious, secular, Jews and non-Jews, Bedouins and Arabs, immigrants from a variety of countries including the former Soviet Union, Scotland and North America, living together for six days. What did we all have in common? We were all EFL teachers! The 25 of us were privileged enough to be chosen to attend "CLASS": Civics, Language and American Studies Seminar in Beit Yatziv in Beer Sheva: the capital of the Negev. The seminar was held for six days at the end of July and was sponsored, run and highly subsidized by the American Embassy here in Israel.

There we participated in 6 days of intensive seminars on how to utilize themes based on the American Civil Rights movement, literature and songs for theme-based teaching with Israeli high school students, learning to draw parallels between our histories as well as cultures. We were given three meals a day, coffee and cake in between, and taken on tours of Beer Sheva. Beit Yatziv's hospitality was superb.

Who taught these seminars? Two American professors were flown in from the United States to teach the different workshops. One was Bret Lott, a creative writing and literature professor, and highly acclaimed novelist with heritage from the deep south, going back to the days of the Civil War. The other was M.L. Liebler, a published urban poet, jazz-jam performer and literature professor from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. Both have a love of literature stemming from the southern United States, and African-American heritage stories, songs, and history. Through their stimulating sessions, they shared with us their knowledge, respect and love of the material. They showed us clips of major figures from the American Civil Rights movement. Through songs and stories from the period, we learned about the main players in the history of those times. In many senses it also afforded us an opportunity to look a bit more objectively at things that happen in our own culture, in Israel today, regarding equality and the civil rights of people in different sectors of our own population.

For the final project, we were divided into groups of 3-4 teachers from different sectors of the population. We were assigned topics on the different periods of time in American history that led up to the Civil Rights movement: from the period of slavery in the United States, to the Civil War, the Harlem Renaissance, as well as the state of civil rights in America today. We worked on our projects from the very first day – during breaks and into the wee- hours of the morning, to enable us to present our topics to our colleagues at the end of the week. It was a joy and an educational experience working together as a team, as we became good friends by the end of the seminar. We are in touch via email to this day, with the possibility of an additional session later on this new school year.

In addition to the two professors, we were given workshops by the energetic Andrea Schindler. Based in Amman, Jordan, Andrea is the Regional English Language Officer of the American Embassy, responsible for the entire Middle East. Besides her interesting stories about life and EFL education throughout the region, she taught us techniques for integrating the information we learned at the seminar, in our classrooms. She is a vivacious professional, and we looked forward to hearing her talks every day.

As if this weren't enough, Beit Yatziv provided additional lectures on multiculturalism in Israeli movies, Israeli Bedouins, and Democracy. The cost of all this was 450 shekels for the week, including room and board and a half gmul (credit) with a grade – the rest of the tab was picked up by Uncle Sam!

The program was planned and implemented with the help of the ever-present Jackie Stein, who saw to all our needs the entire time, and Risa Levy, both American Cultural Center specialists to whom we are also thankful.

To sum up this valuable experience, we would like to point out that – aside from the topic-related educational value (EVERYONE, including the US-raised participants, left feeling they had learnt a LOT about the topics) the week was a sort of immersion-program, where non-native English speakers spoke, ate, slept and functioned in English 24/7. So, in addition to the history, methodology and pedagogy that we learnt, it was fantastic for brushing up on English language proficiency. It was like traveling to America without the need for a passport or plane ticket!

We highly recommend this seminar to anybody who is available next summer and wants to broaden their horizons about a topic we all should know about as English teachers and, even more so, as human beings.

Adele Raemer is an EFL teacher at Ma'ale Habsor Regional Comprehensive School. She is also a counselor for the southern section of the Rural English Education Department (REED) and webmistress (female of «webmaster») for the REED website, a mentor in the Clore EFL Learning Center project in Abu Rabia and Beer Sheva, as well as an online course developer and instructor. Adele earned her MATESOL from Moray House Institute of Education, Herriot-Watt University and lives with her family and dogs on Kibbutz Nirim in the western Negev.

Coby Willner is originally from New York and now lives in Ramat Gan. He is a teacher and coordinator at Tichon Hadash Tel Aviv. He has been teaching for 16 years.

THERE'S LIFE AFTER BAGRUT

Meir Abelson *mabelson@zahav.net.il*

I doubt whether any readers of ETAI FORUM will disagree that – to paraphrase W.S. Gilbert – a teacher's lot is not a happy one. Beset with financial difficulties, staff meetings, parents' meetings, disciplinary problems, preparing material, etc. and the specter of Bagrut looming in the distance, a teacher has to be something of a psychologist, an actor, a wet nurse – and to possess a sense of humor and the patience of Job. To cap it all, there is the eternal battle to make the lessons interesting.

It is not always easy to keep pupils focused on the material we use for intermediate and high school pupils; as one of the latter once commented, rather unkindly: "This is as interesting as an article on the mating habits of the South African newt." Without losing sight of the main purpose – Bagrut – I have found it useful to spice lessons occasionally with something that really grips them. Among the favorites I have found are '"The Monkey's Paw," by W.W. Jacobs, "Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde," by Robert Louis Stevenson and some of the short stories of O'Henry and Somerset Maugham, provided they are not too dated. Another useful source is the website Awesome Stories) http://www.awesomestories.com, provides the most extraordinary illustrations and photographs which can be printed out. The stories may have to be reworked to suit the class level, and suitable questions added.

During the last school year, however, I discovered material that in fact kills two birds with one stone; it stems from one of the hobbies that has absorbed me for many years – the history of Zionism and the State of Israel.

About 25 years ago I published a monthly newsletter entitled "Letter from Jerusalem." It was a voluntary publicity effort that eventually reached nine countries. In 1980 one of them got to the Foreign Office, and I received an invitation from them to have it printed there. The "partnership" lasted about ten years, after which I gave up, when I felt that most of the time I was only preaching to the converted.

Some three years ago, I received a telephone call from a British film producer named Hugh Kitson. He said that he had read one of my papers entitled "PALESTINE: The Original Sin," drawing on archival documents, memoirs written by eye-witnesses, and contemporary publications long out-of-print, describing the history of the British involvement in Palestine from 1917-1948. A Christian friend of Israel, Hugh said that he felt impelled to produce a film based on the subject, and wanted to come to Jerusalem to interview me. Two years later, he rang to tell me that he had just finished a three-hour documentary entitled "The Forsaken Promise," dealing with the manner in which the British had administered the League of Nations' Mandate to set up a Jewish National Home in Palestine. The film tells the story with the appearance of participants and contemporary eye-witnesses from 1917 onwards who are still alive, together with archival documents, contemporary newsreels and photographs. He had also prepared a 45-minute abbreviated version. His intention, he explained, was to screen the film to groups of Members of the British Houses of Parliament, with the object of extracting an apology from them for Britain's abandonment of the Mandate provisions

Hugh invited me to attend the premiere of the film at Atlit, where Christian Friends of Israel were setting up a memorial to the Ma'apilim. It made a powerful impression on the 500-odd people present – even more so when it was shown to an audience of some 5,000 in Binyanei Ha'ooma in Jerusalem during last Succot.

When I saw the abbreviated version, I realized that it had immense possibilities as a tool for teaching both English and history simultaneously. This conviction was strengthened by the following circumstance:

For many years I have taught enrichment groups at four schools in Jerusalem and two in Bet Shemesh. From time to time I have chatted with pupils in the higher grades about the history of the State of Israel and the pre-State period. Though I have not carried out a scientific survey, I found a widespread ignorance of key personalities and events. Few had heard of Kfar Giladi and Trumpeldor, the Ma'apalim, the ship "Exodus," or the Burma Road. All had heard of Wingate; it was the name of a sports center near Netanya. When I asked one pupil who David Ben Gurion was, his reply was "something to do with Israel."

Later, I was staying near Abu Ghosh, and after talking to some of the high school pupils from the village, I made an appointment to meet the principal. He received me in his study, flanked by a large Israeli flag on one side, and a replica of the Declaration of Independence on the other. I came away with the conviction that that the Arab students in Abu Ghosh

possessed a greater knowledge of Israeli history than Jewish students.

I then decided to screen the abbreviated version to a group of my own high school students. The general reaction was shock, followed by the demand: "Why were we never told this?"

I believe that the greatest obstacle to a revivified education system is not so much a financial or structural issue, but rather a matter of educational policy The film "The Forsaken Promise" is a low-key documentary (as its title implies – the producer avoids titles such as "The Broken Promise" or The Betrayed Promise" that could certainly be justified, in view of the facts told by witnesses still living.) One of the longest interviews is with Yossi Harel, who was captain of the Hagana ship "Exodus" in 1947. He relates at length how six British destroyers arrested his ship in international waters on its way to Haifa with 4,500 Holocaust survivors, boarded it, killing three and wounding several, and finally shipping them back to Germany in three prison ships. Throughout the interview, Yossi hardly raises his voice.

I feel we ought to remember that there is life after Bagrut. The Charitable Trust I founded thirty years ago has as its objective "…to help disadvantaged youth in the advancement of their education and to enable them to become good citizens of Israeli society." I see no reason why this should not be one of the principal aims of our educational system.

There is a widespread feeling that we do not instill in our youth either civic values or pride in their homeland. We expect them to risk their lives in its defense and put off their future to defend it. Surely we owe it to them to teach them pride in being what they are – Israelis. They cannot look for inspiration, either to the political echelon or to much of the academic community; and the media, by accentuating the negative, contributes to an atmosphere of apathy, listlessness and lack of confidence in the justice of the legitimacy of Israel's existence.

We can see what is happening to the two countries with whom we are more closely connected: Britain and the United States. Britain's moral decline has been so rapid that any mention of the values that sustained her people in 1940, when they stood alone and defiant before the Nazi war machine, is treated with contempt. The United States appears to be following the same path – "slouching towards Gomorrah," as Judge Robert H. Bork termed it. In both countries, pride in history and heritage have given way to self-denigration and nihilism.

We in Israel, surrounded by people countries who consider us their enemy, follow suit at our peril. One of the chapters in a book I am writing is entitled "A Litany of Lies." It promises to be the longest chapter of all, because my Internet files contain over 500 allegations made against Israel that can be refuted by ascertainable facts. The film "The Forsaken Promise" can be a useful tool in restoring pride and confidence in who we are, and what we have achieved, while reinforcing English language learning.

Meir Abelson was born and educated in England. He has a B.A, Hons. from London University in Classical and Medieval Hebrew with Aramaic. His varied careers have included the British RAF, chartered surveying, journalist, writer, teaching and much volunteer work for which is has been awarded many prestigious prizes. He teaches at Kiryat Hinuch, Bet Shemesh.

FIVE DAYS IN DRIJAT

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Dir… what? Dirjat. Never heard of it? I'm not surprised. I first read of it in Ha'Aretz Online. Somebody called Tomer Cahana was organizing a ten day course in spoken Arabic in August. Participants would study from nine in the morning till four in the afternoon, and would lodge with Bedouin families in the village. There was a telephone number at the end of the article.

I have always dreamt of learning spoken Arabic and of getting to know the other people with whom we share our land. I have always been somewhat ashamed of knowing only a few phrases of the language, and, despite my liberal views, not actually knowing any Arabs. But the dream, like that of getting back my youthful figure, has always been pushed off to "I'll start next summer."

Well, there was the phone number, and here was the phone in my hand. I wasn't obligating myself to anything, was I? I rang up and got the details. Tomer was charming and helpful. I said that I didn't know if I could afford the time in mid-August, and there followed a period of weeks during which I tried to make up my mind. Finally, realizing the number of my students had dwindled to a trickle only to pick up again in September; I rang Tomer and asked if there was a one-week option. There was; I wasn't the only one with only a week to spare. At the very last minute I registered. Thank goodness I got the better of my indecision. It was an unforgettable experience.

Early one mid-August Sunday morning I set out alone from my home in Yehud, heading South in the direction of Beer-Sheba, leaving my husband, daughter and the mad cat to fend for themselves. One glorious week of no cooking, cleaning, washing dishes or explaining to anyone bold enough to ask, why there was no food to their liking to be found anywhere in the house. On the other hand, I had committed myself to many hours a day of study, an activity I hadn't performed so intensively for many a long year. And, though I had been an excellent language student in my youth, I had begun to realize that those days were long gone. It was likely to be a hard slog.

The instructions were to turn off at Lehavim junction, travel for ten minutes, and turn in at Tzomet Shoket, where I would meet Tomer and the other students at 8:30.a.m. Unbelievably, this being Israel, where punctuality is a rarity, by a quarter to nine we were all assembled, and spent a few minutes introducing ourselves. I had joined, as I was to find out during the course, the most amazing group of people it has been my pleasure to meet. There were fourteen of us, ranging in age from 12 to 77; thirteen women and one man. Three of us were Anglo-Saxons, one, a woman originally from Holland, and the rest home grown. We shared, I suppose, a common ideology; all were highly educated, but with no stuffiness, all adventurous and with a sense of humour and fun.

We set off in convoy, in the direction of Arad following Tomer's truck. The rolling hills of wheat land that characterizes the landscape on the way down to Beer-Sheba had given way to the semi-desert hills, which roll downwards towards Arad and then on to the Dear Sea. And the hot, humid heat of central Israel had become the pleasant dry heat of the desert. Empty beige hills, dotted with ramshackle Bedouin encampments, made up of tin shacks and black tents, herds of sheep that look like goats, and the occasional camel, was all that could be seen under a cloudless blue sky. Tomer signaled left where a sign said "Dragot Quarry", and we all followed him, onto a good asphalt road, leading in to what appeared to be the empty desert.

Some five minutes down the road, we rounded a small rise, and there it was: Drijat, a village of pretty coloured houses nestling in the almost-mountains, topped by the Mosque with its minaret pointing to the sky. A sign said, in Arabic, Hebrew and English "Welcome to Drijat". We turned left then right, and parked; there on our right was the school, with the classrooms made up of caravans, a covered courtyard in the centre, bougainvillea, other trees and plants all around. Sitting in the shade of the courtyard, we were introduced for the first time, to our teacher Ishak, principal of the school, Hebrew teacher, Head of the Town Council, and, as we were to learn, the driving force in shaping Drijat, and getting it recognized as a legal entity in Israel.

There, in the open, joined by many of the children who would be our constant companions throughout our stay, Tomer introduced himself again. He told us that it had been his dream for a number of years, to set up a course like this where the students would not only learn the basics of spoken Arabic, but also have a hands on introduction to the culture and way of life of Israeli Arabs. After struggling in vain to get support from the relevant authorities, he finally decided to go it alone. I can only take my hat (the one I took, but never wore) off to him. Everything was perfectly arranged; he was always there for us like a mother hen, or, as one of my

fellow students called him, our 'gannenet' (Kindergarten teacher).

We already knew that we would be staying with the families in the village. Now we were told that we would be staying in pairs. It was Ishak's turn to tell us something of Drijat, and of the houses where we would be staying. First of all, he told us that Drijat was linked up to neither the electricity grid nor to water. The latter was brought in large tankers and transferred to the water storage tanks of each house. Sometimes the water would run out before the next tanker arrived. It made me think twice, every time I turned on a tap, or flushed the toilet – much more than I do at home, though even here I am always conscious of the fact that water is a precious commodity. Electricity had originally been supplied by the generators dotted about the village; however, the price of solar oil had risen so much of late that electricity was limited to the evening hours. Nonetheless, with the help of Shimon Peres, Drijat is on the way to becoming totally 'green' with clean electricity obtained only from the sun. Already twenty houses had been converted to solar energy; everything in the houses, from electric light, to hot water, to fans, to washing machines, and computers, runs off the power of the sun. This didn't include air-conditioning or electric baking ovens. Even so, the school classrooms were air-conditioned, and the bread was all baked in the village taboons. Another twenty houses are soon to be converted. It costs some 43,000 shekels to do the conversion. For the first two years, the upkeep is free; thereafter, it costs 700 shekels a year for maintenance! No wonder the electricity company is not interested in the rest of us converting to the use of solar energy!

Ishak, our teacher, then told us of his struggles in attaining the recent recognition of Drijat, with all the rights of any other village or small town in Israel. He also told us something of the village's history It was not, in fact, a Bedouin village. The original residents were farmers who had arrived in the area at the time of his great grandfather and had purchased the land off the Turks. However, they were surrounded by land settled by the Bedouin tribe of Abu Rabia, and for a time were very closely connected to them; some of the families in the village are still surnamed Abu Rabia, rather than Abu Hamad.

That first day we learned a lot about the history of the place, the history of the Bedouin, how they came to be in Israel, and how, after the signing of the Peace Treaty with Egypt, Israel started to set up permanent Bedouin townships in the Negev, and about the problems that ensued. Drijat, we learned from Ishak, was very different from many of these towns. There is no unemployment; in fact there is considerable wealth. One of the biggest trucking companies of the south is owned by two families in the village. Everyone is either working or studying; they have forty students in higher learning – medicine, pharmacy, teaching, law and so on. Three quarters of them study abroad. Ishak's own son studied in Romania, and returned with a Romanian wife who works in Beer-Sheba.

After this introduction, our studies began in earnest. Everything was transliterated into Hebrew script, five or 10 days not being long enough to deal with learning a new script. Everything I wrote was transliterated into Latin script! We began with greetings; how to introduce ourselves, how to ask someone's name, how to take our leave. Arabic is full of polite phrases and ways of offering the guest to partake of food and drink. In fact, wherever we went, as soon as we sat down, sweet tea flavoured with sage was brought round, only afterwards to be followed by the traditional unsweetened bitter coffee (kahwa asasda).

Ishak worked tirelessly and worked us tirelessly, but always keeping the atmosphere in the class light – hearted and amusing. He exaggerated his gestures, told funny stories, made each of us repeat everything, but always with variations, and then went back he went to what we had learnt first. He made us translate everything; he would say some thing in Hebrew and get us to say it in Arabic, and vice versa. Because he had never taught Arabic before (remember, he is a Hebrew teacher), he sometimes forgot what language he was speaking and said something in Arabic which he told us to translate into ….Arabic. We laughed. "Did I say that in Arabic?" he asked. Everybody asked questions, everybody had different difficulties and everybody was patient with everybody else. Ishak adapted himself to each of our learning styles. He never forgot anyone. At four o'clock, our lessons ended. Rather than being exhausted, we were invigorated.

Now was the time for us to meet 'our' families'. If we thought that we were done with learning for the day, now we would discover that our learning was just beginning. Let me explain. Judy, my partner, aged twenty seven and about to be married, and I were assigned to the house of Tagrid and Daud and their ten children, with the eleventh due in three months! Culture shock number one: How do you remember all those unfamiliar, difficult to pronounce names? Except for the eldest, Mohammed, aged 16, and Nada, aged 12, the children knew practically no Hebrew. Thrown in at the deep end, it was either sink or swim. Tagrid, originally

from Hebron, and in contrast to the other women in the village, also knew little Hebrew, but the warmth of her welcome was unmistakable. We were shown our room. Culture shock number two: No beds, just mattresses on the floor, with a duvet and pillows! No sheets! I know this bothered some of the students, though I wasn't one of them. Then there were no cupboards for our clothes, so we lived out of our suitcases. Culture shock number three: The lack of privacy. We shared our room with two or three of the girls or whichever one of them felt like sleeping there. They were as curious about us as we were about them; they had never had guests staying with them who were not family, and Jews, to boot! So they went through our clothes, played with our phones and cameras, took photos, played games (even the ones I didn't know how to play), used my make-up and generally gave us no privacy. This bothered Judy more than it did me, as she wanted to have a bit of a sleep in the afternoon, after class. Slim hope!

There was one bathroom, scrupulously clean, as was everything else in the house. In it was a shower, a lavatory, a basin and hooks on the wall on which to hang one's towels. What did one do with one's clothes, while one was showering? Put down the lavatory seat and put them on it! And here was an example of my language woes; I had learnt the word for toilet -marahid. But one could also say 'hamam'. (bathroom). Faced with my hostess, I almost invariably forgot the former; 'hamam' was more familiar. Forgetting words and phrases was true for almost all of us. As soon as we had to use what we had learned, and which we had really studied and felt we knew, our minds would go blank. We would look at our new friends, and words failed us. We realized that it was not enough to know all the words by heart; we needed to practice them aloud and to get our mouths around them until they came out automatically. My mind went back to my days teaching in the language laboratory of Tel-Aviv University, and I realized what a useful a tool it was.

Supper was taken either with our host families or, as a group with one of the other families. Everybody vied for the honour of hosting us. We were never, however, quite sure of the eating etiquette. At lunch there was no cutlery nor individual plates, only little dishes with chips, olives, labane, humus, patties, pasta and tomato and cucumber salad, and the ubiquitous 'hubiz taboon'; the large flat bread like an Iraqi pita. Varda, one of the students, always managed to empty one of the small dishes and expropriate the plate. I just dug in with the bread and my fingers. When we asked Ishak what was done, he just said, if you want a plate, just ask for a plate. Ah yes. Hadn't thought of that! There was one other oddity, for us, which was that the women never sat down with us to eat. Not that I couldn't easily get used to being served on a permanent basis!

So what was it really like spending five days learning a language which was for me, as for most of us, completely unknown? How much Arabic did I really learn? How functional was my Arabic at the end of five days? Well, I learned about seven hundred words, I go over them every day and remember most of them. I learned a great many phrases, which I can usually match up to the appropriate circumstances. I'm still terribly unsure of how to conjugate verbs, so all my verbs are used in the infinitive. And I'm not too good on possessive pronouns either, similar though they are to Hebrew. But I know that those who stayed on for the next five days became much more practiced in these areas. And one thing is certain; all of us have registered for further learning. We all want to become proficient Arabic speakers.

It was as a language teacher, though, that I gained the greatest insights. It is true that students have different ways of learning, which have to be taken into consideration. One thing, however, became very clear to me. Having things explained in a language I know, having words translated, simplified and accelerated our progress. Throwing students into a classroom where the only the target language is used, leads to too many misconceptions. Progress tends to be slow. The other thing that I knew, but got to feel in the flesh is the importance of oral repetition. I think that all the students agreed that we could have acquired fewer words, and practiced more structures. This is where I fondly remembered my teaching days in the Tel-Aviv language laboratory; language needs to be spoken aloud until it becomes automatic. And it needs to be heard until you can hear and understand all the words as they are spoken. Of course, all you teachers who are reading this know exactly how "easy" this is to implement in a classroom with forty pupils. All I can say is that knowing how difficult it is to remember words, and how much more difficult it is to produce them when needed even if you know them, has made me much more aware of my pupils' difficulties.

During our stay in Drijat we got to know another way of life; one very different from our own, and different, too, from the large Arab towns and villages in the centre and the north of Israel. But the kids all have cell-phones, play computer games and love going to the Mall in Beer-Sheba. They all want to study and get on in life. And the women – for as women we mixed mostly with the women – how interesting it was to hear how it affected and shocked them and their children, if the

husband took a second wife. Not that many did, in the village. Too many complications!

On the last night we were all sitting outside one of the houses, enjoying the cool evening breeze, men and women together, drinking tea, eating fruit and digging in to ice cream. Suddenly something struck me that I hadn't noticed before; nobody was smoking! Immediately, I asked about it. I knew it wasn't anything to do with religion. What could it be? Ishak explained. "Not many people in the village are smokers, so we decided that the village would be smoke-free. You can't buy cigarettes here, and nobody smokes in the village. The reason is that we didn't want our children to start smoking because of the example of their parents. And so, in fact, practically none of the teenagers smoke."

What an amazing place, Drijat.

Jennifer Byk was born in Egypt, grew up in England and came to Israel in 1965. She has taught at universities and colleges around the country. She teaches once a week in Nitzan jail in Ramle. She also teaches small groups of students in Taibe, which is one of the reasons she went down to Drijat in the first place. Jennifer is the mother of four, grandmother of five and proud owner of two cats.

Netsurfing Column

NETSURFING

Miri Yochanna miri.yochanna@gmail.com

Wow, it's that time of year again, amazing how time flies. At this time of the year I am always looking for something new and exciting to warm up my days and make my classes more fun. With this thought in mind, I've found some wonderful sites for us. I don't know how many of you have actually ever tried a webquest, but they are so much fun and so different from what we normally do in class, I thought you would enjoy having a look at these. Always remember, if you have a good website to share with me, send it to me at miri.yochanna@gmail.com

Name	**Web Quests by Chlo Thivin**
Address: http://webquests.cthivin.free.fr	
Category	**Webquests**
What's in the site?	This is a site that has links to eight really nice webquests. Each webquest can be done on line and it can be downloaded as a document. The topics are varied including Canada, Harry Potter, Peace and others. The activities are varied in levels and can be used for different levels both in class and for different classes. These webquests are very well done. The links for each subtopic are at various levels and from a huge variety of sources. The topics are fun and they are very motivating.
My personal favorite	I liked the webquest on Canada (being Canadian and all). No, really, the webquest is fun. It takes the surfer all across Canada, through some really good sites and through some very exciting activities. One of the nicest things about this web quest is that you have the possibility in one of the links, to go into the class links of the classes that did this webquest and there you can see all the other projects those classes did.
Possible uses	Projects, research, topic development are all just a few ideas that come to mind when surfing this website and its web quests. Each topic can be fully developed using all the material on line and if you are interested, you can expand on it in your class.
NOTE	The list of web quests is in a French site so the grades are mentioned in French (Canada-(6eme-a-4eme) for example. Essentially they are aimed at junior high and high school students. (4eme=grade 10, lycee = high school, lere = grade 7, just to help you out a bit ☺)

Name	**Tall Tales Audio**
Address: http://www.talltalesaudio.com	
Category	**Storytelling – reading and listening**
What's in the site?	This site is so cool. It includes a collection of stories as well as the audio version of them. This essentially means you can have the students listen and read along while they listen to the entire story. The reading is a bit quick, I wouldn't recommend it to younger kids, but for grade 6 and up, it's super. Another nice feature of this site is the tips for teachers, parents and librarians. There are storytelling tips, teaching you how to be a better storyteller. There are also podcasts, with audio tips on storytelling. They are very good and also include fun stories after each tip. Another cool feature in this site is the part called fun for kids. When you click on it, it takes the kids to a collection of activities for storytelling, including writing new endings to stories with the same characters as in the stories they were reading / listening to before.
My personal favorite	I loved the podcasts. The tips are so good and the stories you get to hear afterwards are fun. The stories are also excellent. I really like the idea of the audio aspect, it offers the students and you, something that we all have been looking for – someone who will tell the story dramatically, with background music, etc.
Possible uses	You could use this in class to have the students listen to a story and follow along if you print out the story for them (that is one of the features, remember?). You could have the students read the story and listen along with their headset, so those who need that extra bit of reinforcement in their reading will benefit from that as well.
NOTE	There are more stories and other products on sale, but you don't have to purchase anything to enjoy the website as it is.

Name	**Advanced Composition for Non-Native Speakers of English**
Address: http://elsbee.com/index.htm	
Category	**Writing at a high school level**
What's in the site?	This site teaches how to write various types of compositions. This is a perfect site for high school students who are studying how to write the different compositions that are needed on the Bagrut. It teaches how to write persuasion (opinion) essays, cause and effect essays, and others. It gives step-by-step instructions on how to do it, with outlines for each type of essay as well as grammatical tips and instructions. Furthermore, for those who want to take the TOEFL eventually, there is a wonderful practice page for writing at that level. And for us, there is a downloadable book- a course actually. It's free and full of fantastic information. Well worthwhile to download.
My personal favorite	I loved the explanations, the simplicity of everything there. I really liked the samples that are provided from students. Very nicely presented and very interesting to have a look at. There's lots to learn from it. I especially liked the downloadable course.
Possible uses	This can be used for any high school class that needs or wants more writing practice. It's wonderful. I would present it in class, if possible and then send the students home to work.
NOTE	For those who might be interested, there is a course that one could sign up for. When I checked the site now, the course was closed as it already started. But if you sign up for the updates, you'll be notified when it starts again.

Name	**Brian and Neko's Place**
Address: http://www.neko.ca/component/option/com_frontpage/item id,1"	
Category	**Resource and on line work**
What's in the site?	This site is aimed at helping with listening comprehension and with pronunciation. It has online surveys, group work, listening activities, reading activities, and so much more. The topics are different and intriguing as well as being interesting and motivating for the students. It even has a chat that your students can practice their chatting skills. It has a very cute email event where the students sign up and get short emails from their virtual friend who is traveling the world.
My personal favorite	I loved the section called Street Sounds in Pronunciation. It is so cool. The students listen to sentences and they have to say how many words they hear, what pronouns they hear, what sentences they hear. It's such a great way to practice listening comprehension. Very well done. I also liked the section that has the students work in groups to discuss life spans. It's the section called Longevity. They learn about healthy living and what affects our life span and they get to take a survey of their own life span. It's so cool.
Possible uses	This could be used in class to have the students check themselves and practice their listening comprehension abilities. They do reading, group work and they discuss new and different topics. Another option is to assign the students to work on their own, but I don't think it's as much fun as many of the activities are for groups.
NOTE	The site has many links in it but the ones that are useful are the ones from pronunciation until the Remembrance Day link. The others are more related to life in Vancouver, the school there, etc. There is even a section in Japanese if you can read it.

Thanks to Valerie

Valerie Jakar has been an "activist" in ETAI for as long as I can remember and that's a really long time. When I say she was an "activist" I mean that literally. She was on the board and served as Treasurer for several years. She was involved in local events in the Jerusalem area and co-convened a number of national conferences. She made useful suggestions for the smooth running of the organization and did a great deal of PR work for ETAI both in Israel and abroad encouraging well known educators and language teacher to be guest speakers at our conferences.

Valerie, a teacher educator and counselor engaged in professional development projects for teachers of ESOL, has always been a very active member of TESOL. She has recently agreed to increase her involvement with this organization as a convener of TESOL International New York 2008, in addition to, her many other activities in the field of mentoring. So, unfortunately for ETAI, she has resigned from the board. We are extremely grateful for her past services to ETAI.

We are happy that she is moving on to bigger and better things and we wish her continued success in her endeavours.

Nava Horovitz
Chair

In the next issue of the ETAI Forum you can read an exclusive interview with Valerie!

Call for Articles

We await your contributions to the ETAI Forum. This is where you can make your voice heard.!

Please submit all contributions as WORD documents as an attachment to an email. The name of the document should be the title of the article, or part of it. Please try to keep the language non-sexist and use they instead of he / she. We are interested in publishing references, but these should be included within the text. References should be written out in APA style. You can find this in the "OWL Handouts" put out by Purdue University http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts.research.

If you have a photograph of yourself, or any other attractive visual material, like cartoons, we would be interested in receiving this.

At the end of the text, please include brief biodata about your professional life, including where you teach and any other significant information. Please include your email address.

You can submit your contributions to: etaiforum@gmail.com.

ETAI WINTER CONFERENCE

Theme: Perspectives

Thursday, December 6th, 2007

9:00 - 16:00

Kaye Academic College of Education
33 Yehuda Halevy St, Beer Sheva

Regain your perspective…

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Re-evaluate the present
Re-invent the future

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