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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.

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>.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

I have just returned from a small conference in Vienna. Among others, I attended one session on ‘NESTs’ and ‘Non-NESTs’. No, nothing to do with birds and eggs: NESTs stands for native English speaking teachers and Non-NESTs for...the rest of us. The researcher was looking at how teachers see the distinction: is it important? What does it mean?

The results were very complex and sometimes contradictory, as is typical of a lot of research into teaching and teachers, but one little bit of dialogue that she quoted I found very thought-provoking:

Student: I see you as a native speaker.

Non-NEST: But I don't see myself as a native.

Student: But I compare your language and the language of some other professors and you are much closer to the ideal. Yes, the ideal is not necessarily reached only by people born in the US or UK.

Vodopija-Krstanovic, 2009

This reminded me of another piece of research, done by a student of mine at Haifa University, where the school students at a Nazereth school overwhelmingly said that they saw their (Non-NEST) teacher as their role model for English proficiency.

It seems to me that today the ideal model English teacher is that teacher who has reached such a high level of proficiency in English, that the fact that they are not native speakers becomes irrelevant. In fact ‘native-speakerism’ in general is pretty irrelevant as a criterion for good English teaching these days: what is important is how good your English is and how good a teacher you are.

There is, admittedly, a problem of self-image: some Non-NESTs see themselves as in some way deficient, and some NESTs see themselves as in some way superior. Neither assumption is justified. We prove ourselves to be good, or bad, teachers according to the results of our work in the classroom, not according to where we were born or brought up.

A survey of ETAI members who are particularly active – on the board, or organizing mini-conferences – shows that the majority of these are in fact NESTs. This is mainly for historical reasons: when ETAI was set up, there were more NESTs around, and these were the ones who took the initiative. But the situation has changed: Non-NESTs, you are far more representative of the main body of English teachers in Israel than are the NESTs! Where are you? Please come forward; we need you!

We also need more young teachers to get involved with ETAI... but that's another topic, for another time.

Penny Ur (pennyur@gmail.com)

ETAI Chairperson

Reference: Vodopija-Krstanovic, I. (February, 2009). NESTs vs. Non-NESTs.

Paper presented at the Conference of the Centre for English Language Teaching, University of Vienna.

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Every person is unique. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses. Everyone is good at some things and worse at other things. A learner having difficulties, whether diagnosed with learning disabilities, ADHD or at risk for failure in school, is a unique person who has strengths and excels at doing many different things. However, school poses a particularly difficult challenge to these learners, and finding ways to help these learners succeed poses a challenge to teachers.

Most of the articles in this special Learning Differences issue of the ETAI Forum focus on difficulties in acquiring English language literacy. Tsafi Timor offers ideas on how to identify pupils with special needs in the mainstream classroom. Carol Goldfus tells the story of a young man who, with appropriate intervention, overcame numerous obstacles and successfully completed his Bagrut exam in English. Peggy Barzilay, Tova Teitlebaum, Ofra Rosenstein, Liz Shapiro and Leah Urso all offer practical ideas for teaching reading, writing and designing instructional materials. Fern Levitt, Sharon Azaria and Suzie Secemski describe specific programs that successfully promote reading acquisition among at-risk learners. Robert Lederman explains how vision affects the ability to read. Naomi Epstein points out that using a dictionary is vital for hearing impaired learners. This issue also introduces a regular column, Questions from you! by Aharon Korman Gvaryahu the National Counselor in the English Inspectorate for issues related to learning disabilities. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this issue of the ETAI Forum.

We'd like to leave you with a thought from Kim Peek, who was the inspiration for *Rain Man*: “Recognizing and respecting differences in others, and treating everyone like you want them to treat you, will help make our world a better place for everyone. ... Everyone is different!” (www.lucarinform.com/inspire/)

Michele Ben and Amanda Caplan, ETAI Forum co-editors

ETAI, PLEASE E-MAIL ME!

Marna Snyder (etaioffice@gmail.com)

Dear ETAI Member,

Recently we have been upgrading our services to members. Accordingly, we've subdivided our membership list into geographical sub-groups for the purpose of sending e-mail communications to members in a given area. For example, before the Beer Sheva Conference, we sent e-mail messages to all of those living in the southern part of the country; before the Haifa Conference we sent messages to members in the northern part of the country.

In order to do this, we **must** receive e-mail addresses for **all** our members, from every part of the country and abroad. If you have never received e-mail communication from the **ETAI office**, it means that we do not have your e-mail address, so please e-mail it to me as soon as possible at this address: etaioffice@gmail.com

Likewise, if you have changed your e-mail address in the last year, please e-mail your current address to the office. If you are not sure whether or not we have your correct e-mail address, please email me and that will ensure that we have your address.

Waiting to hear from you soon,

Best regards,
Marna



BOUND FOR BEER SHEVA

Marna Snyder (etaioffice@gmail.com)

The night before the ETA I Winter Conference in Beer Sheva on December 28th, 2008, Israel sent troops into the Gaza area. Everyone was transfixed, watching it on the evening news. Suddenly we weren't sure what the security arrangements would be concerning the southern part of the country, and in particular, Beer Sheva. After months of working hard to organize the conference, would we be allowed to hold it as scheduled?

There was a flurry of phone calls between those in Beer Sheva and elsewhere, and we were informed by the security services that we could, indeed, proceed with the conference. What a relief! We spoke with the representatives of the two bus companies bringing participants from Ra'anana and Tel Aviv, as well as Jerusalem, and gave them the go-ahead.

To give credit where credit is due, most of our conference participants did show up as planned, so that the attendance was over 300 people, despite uncertainty over the situation. There were people who drove all the way down from the north, and there were those who arrived by train. Penny Ur stated for the record that ETA I wanted to show our presence in the south, and to show our support for the teachers living there. They certainly deserved no less!

The Beer Sheva Conference was deemed a success by all who attended: the plenary speakers - Dr. Batia Laufer, Dr. Richard Curwin and Dr. Judy Steiner - are all experts in their fields, and their talks were very well received. In addition, there were close to 40 presentations by teachers on every level, offering a great variety of topics to choose from. The conference had a special "buzz" of excitement which everyone felt.

Mitzi Geffen and Michele Ben, the conference co-conveners, and Carla Nochomovitz and Melissa Test on the committee are to be congratulated for a job very well done!

Note: The irony is that if the conference date had been one day later, we would not have been permitted to hold it, as the security situation in Beer Sheva worsened considerably at that point, and a rocket later fell at the neighboring school. Residents of Beer Sheva, Ashkelon and the entire southern area of Israel were subjected to a barrage of rockets over the next few weeks.

ETA I MINI-CONFERENCES

Fram Sokel (fsokel@gmail.com)

This school year has seen a continued buzz of activity in the form of mini-conferences around the country. To date, six such conferences have taken place in: Hazor Haglilit, Maghar, Bet Yerach on the shores of the Kinneret, Kfar Saba, Rishon Lezion and Jerusalem, and an additional two are planned during May, in Nazrat Illit and Eilat.

The conferences have enabled more than 500 English teachers of all grades to benefit from the wisdom and experience of practicing teachers and experts in the field on a diverse range of topics. They have provided opportunities to browse exhibitions of current books and teaching materials, and, perhaps most importantly, network and share ideas and dilemmas with other teachers.

If you missed the opportunity to attend one of the mini-conferences this year, don't worry! Next year is another year! The conferences are all organized on a voluntary basis and we already have several offers by teachers in various locations who would like to host a conference in their school.

We invite you to 'join the club' and become pro-active in contributing to our own continued professional development by organizing and attending mini-conferences in your area in the future.

BEGINNING THE YEAR WITH A MINI IN KFAR SABA

Linda Barron (barron.linda@gmail.com)

A very successful ETAI mini-conference was held at Bar-Lev Junior High School in Kfar Saba on Wednesday, January 14th. The program this year was geared to the Elementary and Junior High School levels and everyone who attended left with a plethora of great ideas and useful activities about nursery rhymes, hungry caterpillars and some challenging wikis for the computer buffs. The exhibition “hall” was packed with lots of exciting new books, games and other enticing wares; there is such a huge selection of English teaching materials today that the choice of what to buy can be agonising! The coffee and sandwiches were delicious and plentiful. All in all it was a most worthwhile and enjoyable afternoon. Kudos to Ahuva Kellman and Elaine Alkalai who organised this mini!

Don't miss an ETAI Mini-Conference at a venue near you!

Linda Barron has been teaching English in Kfar Saba for 27 years! She loves English, loves language and literature – but most of all loves the Junior High kids!

ETAI MINI CONFERENCE COMES TO BEIT YERACH!!

Helen Varulkar (helen.varulkar@gmail.com) and Aviva Shapiro (shapiroaviva@gmail.com)

On February 3rd, 2009 an ETAI Mini Conference was held at Beit Yerach Comprehensive High School in the Jordan Valley. More than 80 teachers spent an enjoyable afternoon listening to lectures and presentations that were enlightening and thought provoking.

Dr. Avi Tsur, the English inspector for the rural area spoke about “The Makings of an Effective Teacher” in his opening lecture. He discussed the elements that make a lesson meaningful for teacher and students alike.

The opening lecture was followed by three parallel sessions which were varied and suitable for different levels and grades. Elaine Coleman spoke about the benefits of using drama in Elementary School. She presented a lovely drama project that she has integrated into the 6th grade English program with a view to increasing pupil motivation and promoting oral and reading fluency.

Stephanie Fuchs spoke about the Emotional and Social Aspects of Learning Disabilities and gave us some insight into why some students “do the things that they do”. We learned that learning disabilities also have a great impact on the child's emotional life. Hence they must be taught both academic and social skills.

Shelly Ganiel presented the poem “Mending Wall” by Robert Frost which she had taught in her 12th grade 5 point class which participated in the recent pilot program which infused higher order thinking skills into the teaching of literature. She shared the positive experiences of the process she went through with her students and gave us some detailed lesson plans.

In conclusion, Penny Ur gave an entertaining talk about interesting ways to develop critical and creative thinking in other areas of English language teaching. Her talk “HOTS are not just for literature” was an amusing and wonderful way to end a superb conference.

Quite a few book publishers, an integral part of every ETAI Conference, set up their stands to enable teachers to browse and examine various teaching materials. Thanks to UPP for providing the refreshments, Eric Cohen Books for the bags and Pearson for their pens.

Most importantly, the English Staff at Beit Yerach felt that hosting the ETAI Mini Conference was worth all the effort. All of the teachers pitched in and organized the day with enthusiasm. There was a lovely atmosphere and it was a stimulating and uplifting experience for all. Hope to do it again next year!!

Helen and Aviva, both experienced teachers, work together on the English Staff of Beit Yerach.

A SUPER-SIZED MINI IN RISHON LETZION

Michele Ben (mggben@gmail.com)

It was a muddy, wet winter afternoon but over one hundred dedicated English teachers gathered in Rishon LeTzion at the Dorot Jr. High School on Sunday, February 22nd for this year's ETAI mini-conference in the area. Miriam Kluska, the regional inspector, who worked hard helping organize the conference with Niva Spigler, Amanda Caplan and myself, gave the opening talk entitled: "English Teachers: A Look at the Bright Side." Following a break for browsing the materials exhibition were three parallel sessions. One session called "Great Projects for the Elementary English Classroom" was aimed at elementary school teachers given by Dorit Cohen and Shiri Rosenberg. Sara Dayan, winner of last year's English award, shared her knowledge in a session called "The Toughest Nut to Crack: How to Teach Writing." Nicola Crowley introduced the attendees at her talk to the three free new and exciting resources for English teaching and learning developed by the British Council (www.teachingenglish.org.uk, www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish-podcasts). Penny Ur's closing lecture, "Teaching Vocabulary: Going beyond the textbook," left all participants thinking about ways to supplement and adapt textbook material at all levels to make sure students acquire a better vocabulary.

The teachers who came were quite satisfied and are looking forward to the next mini-ETAI conference in the area. Here are some of their comments: "It is great to attend this conference for the first time, and I will surely attend in the future. Thank you." "The presentation given by the British Council was very interesting." "I think that we should have such a conference at least twice a year. A lot of thanks!" "Sara Dayan was great and as always Penny Ur was amazing." "Excellent. I've enjoyed it a lot. Looking forward to the next ETAI conference." "It was my first conference and I enjoyed it very much. I learned a lot from Dorit and Shiri's presentation. Thank you." "Thanks for a great conference. It was a most informative afternoon."

Don't miss the next mini at a location near you! It's sure to be super! And best of all...you'll be left waiting for more!

Michele Ben teaches Junior High School pupils at Ginsburg HaOren, Yavneh

MAXIMIZE YOUR MINI

Jennifer Spigelman (jenspig@gmail.com)

With over 150 participants there was nothing mini about the conference held in Maghar on March 17th. We had two stimulating plenaries. Our own Elisheva Barkon talked about reading fluency and visiting professor Mike Liebler, sponsored by The American Embassy gave some practical suggestions for the classroom. Four parallel sessions provided a variety of options for different grade levels and interests. We had sessions on learning disabilities, word walls, an internet resource site and task based listening. From games, course books, readers, dictionaries, computer programs and even opportunities for study abroad we had a packed material exhibition hall. The buzz of teachers meeting and greeting old friends and new was heard all around. Food, hats, conference bags and pens added to the atmosphere of a happening.

How did we maximize our mini? Through cooperation of all involved parties. When material exhibitors, teachers within the field from elementary to university, The British Council and The American Embassy work together, success is guaranteed. And what was the glue that held it all together and gave us maximum strength? The answer: ETAI working together with the Northern Region English Inspectors, Yousef Dagash and Fran Sokel.

Jennifer Spigelman is an elementary school teacher at Emek Yizreal in Kibbutz Ginneagar. She also works as a pedagogical advisor at Oranim and a counselor for teachers in the Bedouin sector in the North. She is a regular presenter at ETAI conferences.

IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIAL NEEDS WITHIN MAINSTREAM ENGLISH CLASSROOMS

Tsafi Timor (*tsafit@bezeqint.net*)

The need to assess students suspected of suffering from learning disabilities (LD) is clear. Furthermore, if a student demonstrates difficulties in foreign language (FL) acquisition it is important to assess that pupil for LD as well.

The relationship between LD and FL difficulties has been subject to past research and is still controversial. Over the past several years, a term defining a new type of disability, “Foreign Language Learning Disability” (FLLD), has appeared in both LD and FL literature. Supporters of this view (e.g. Reed and Stansfield, 2004) contend that students with LD are likely to have difficulties with FL courses. Indeed, Ganschow and Sparks used the term FLLD in their early studies (1987, 1993). However, in more recent studies, they postulate that many students classified as having LD passed FL courses, with little or no apparent difficulty. Moreover, they encountered students who were not diagnosed with LD, who were experiencing difficulties and even failing FL courses. Thus, they decided to discontinue the use of the term FLLD and concluded that FL difficulties occur along a continuum of very strong to very weak learners and there is no discrete entity such as FLLD (Sparks, Ganschow & Javorsky 1993).

Whether or not FLLD is a distinct disability, English teachers must cope with students of different levels and of a wide scope of language aptitudes. According to the Gaussian curve, about 14% of the population is “probably less than others” and 2% is “definitely less than others”. This means that 6-7 students in any mainstream class will be below or far below the average. Students in this 14-16% might suffer from low IQ, social-emotional problems, behavioural problems, lack of learning strategies or LD (whether diagnosed or not). However, since the Act of “Integration of Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Education” (2002) was introduced in Israel, the number of students

with difficulties in mainstream classes has increased dramatically, creating new challenges for English teachers. Moreover, as a result of this policy of inclusion, in a sense all teachers have become “teachers of special education.” That is why it is imperative for English teachers to acquire tools to diagnose difficulties. This will enable them to meet the new challenges and remain effective teachers.

Learning disabilities are usually diagnosed with psycho-educational assessments conducted by authorized evaluators. The main purposes of such assessments are to:

1. Identify strengths and needs: The professional conducting the assessment identifies discrepancies between current and expected accomplishments. When the requirements are higher than the accomplishments, a need is identified. Contrarily, where expected results are achieved, a strength is identified.
2. Determine the eligibility of a particular child for special education services provided by school (שעות שילוב).

However, there is another type of assessment which can be administered by the teacher in class without having to be an authorized or professional evaluator. It is called “Curriculum-based Assessment” and it is carried out for the purpose of instruction.

One of the tools I recommended using in heterogeneous classes is Screening Tests. This tool enables the teacher to create the class profile both vertically and horizontally. Horizontally the teacher can examine the strengths and needs of each individual student. Vertically the teacher gains data about the class profile on specific skills, areas, topics and targeted criteria (Table 1). Screening tests help a teacher get acquainted with a new class at the beginning of a school year, or examine a specific area of study should the need arise.

Table 1: Class Profile

Student's Name	Word Decoding	Written Proficiency	Reading Comprehension	Spelling
Ron	Reads fluently and accurately (14/15)	Expresses ideas freely; rich vocabulary	6/6	10/10
Tal	Reads initial syllable and makes guesses (9/15)	Writes a paragraph coherently; poor vocabulary	Recall task incomplete; does not monitor his work (4/6)	5/10 Mistakes on visual ground
Rina	Reads syllable-by-syllable; omits letters; confuses b/d, w/m/n (11/25)	Confuses upper- & lower-case letters; sentences do not relate to topic; cannot write in cursive writing	Fails to understand questions; has problems with open-ended questions; lacks confidence (3/6)	4/10 Mistakes on visual and auditory ground

The first step is to decide on the relevant criteria. Existing literature on FL aptitude offers a variety of topics to be included as predictors of FL success or failure. Since the late 1960s the MLAT (Modern Language Aptitude Test) designed by Carroll and Sapon (1959, 2000) has been the most widely used aptitude instrument. It uses a “fake” FL and English grammar to measure FL aptitude. Its authors claim that it predicts how well, relative to other individuals, an individual can learn a foreign language in a given amount of time and under given conditions. They identified four factors predictive of FL learning:

1. Phonetic coding (sound-symbol associations);
2. Grammatical sensitivity (the ability to recognize grammatical structures in sentences);
3. Inductive language learning ability (the ability to infer the rules governing a set of language materials);
4. Rote learning ability (the ability to learn associations between sounds and meanings effectively and rapidly and to retain these associations);

In 1967, Carroll and Sapon authored the Modern Language Aptitude Test – Elementary (MLAT-E) which can be used for younger students (grades 3 through 6). Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery (PLAB, 1968) includes verbal intelligence, auditory skills and motivation. The main advantage of this test over the MLAT is that it includes the measurement of motivation, a major component of FL learning. Indeed, motivation may be the root of poor performance in a language course despite a high score on an aptitude test like the MLAT. Alternatively, a relatively low score on an aptitude test combined with high motivation to learn a language may result in average or even above average performance since a motivated student invests time and effort in the language programme.

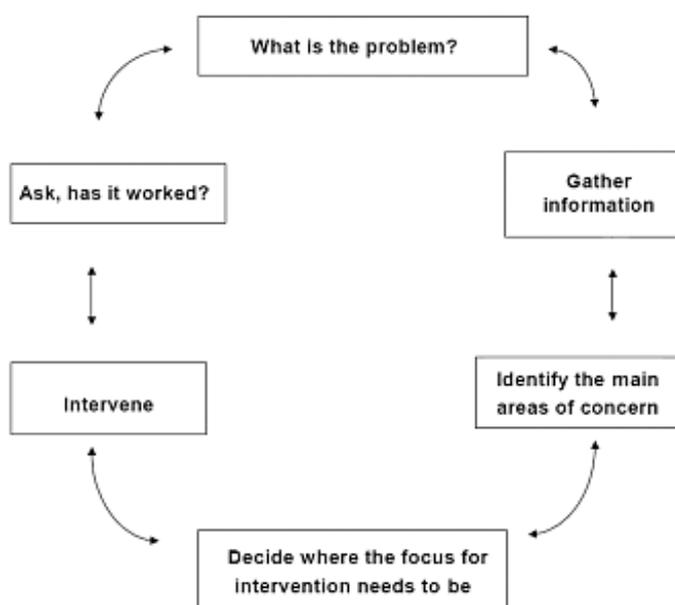
A standardized, norm-references test is not necessary to provide a teacher with a class profile. Every teacher can prepare screening tests on topics relevant for a given class. For example, if the teacher wants to get a class profile of the students’ mastery of grammar topics taught the previous year, screening tests on this will provide the picture. In Table 1 we can see a class profile on four areas, enabling the teacher to examine how the class is coping with word decoding, spelling, reading comprehension and writing skills. At the same time it provides a profile of individual students. The teacher can identify gaps in a certain student’s performance, and identify that student’s strengths and weaknesses in any language component. Thus, screening tests enable the teacher to get a picture of each student and a profile of the class.

Ideally, the analysis of such a table should be followed by setting teaching objectives which are measurable and operational (i.e. “Review the Past Simple and Past Perfect” rather than “Review the grammar from last year”). Moreover, screening tests usually provide information about the learner’s learning rate and preferences. Thus, students with similar learning rates can be placed in the same FL class grouping in schools where tracking exists, and in other schools this information may help the teacher set realistic expectations. During the intervention phase, the teacher can help the individual student rely and exploit their strengths. This can be done, for example, in a reading comprehension exercise. If the student demonstrated semantic knowledge even though their overall performance was low, the student can be advised on how to use this strength as a reading strategy tool.

Figure 1 illustrates the cyclic procedures for screening tests in class. They involve a number of phases:

1. Posing a question (e.g. “How fluent are they in reading?”);
2. Gathering information by using screening tests;
3. Analysis of data;
4. Setting teaching objectives;
5. Monitoring and reflecting (“Has it worked?”);
6. Posing a new question (e.g. “What are the main mistakes I can spot in reading?”).

Figure 1: The Cycle of Assessment (Livock, 2006)



Indeed, teachers should work in conjunction with psycho-educational evaluators by using their professional knowledge of teaching EFL. They observe the student in multiple classroom situations and are knowledgeable about the student's oral and written skills. Therefore, a classroom teacher obtains important data about each student through informal classroom assessments. Ideally, the findings of the formal didactic assessment are then combined with the data gained by the teachers and thus a complete profile of a student is successfully created.

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METACOGNITION IN “COGNITIVE REHABILITATION”: A Case Study of a Student with a Comorbidity of ADD and Dyslexia

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Abstract

Metacognition is defined as taking control of and directing one's own thinking processes, and being aware of one's own cognitive strengths and limitations. Students with dyslexia and learning disabilities appear to lack these metacognitive skills, which are seen as a critical aspect of cognition. Within the framework of literacy development and bilingualism, an approach to metacognition is presented through the case study of an adolescent student in the mainstream classroom who has dyslexia with the comorbidity of an attention deficit disorder (ADD). This paper illustrates the effectiveness of metacognition in general cognitive processing. In addition, it demonstrates the positive transfer of these processes to reading comprehension in English as a Foreign Language. The cyclic process between the two processes, namely cognition and metacognition,

is illustrated and the reciprocal nature of these two processes emphasized.

Introduction

Metacognition is the ability to understand, monitor and self-regulate cognition and has been regarded as a key factor in understanding learning and reading comprehension in students with a learning disability (Wong, 1991). The relevance of metacognition to learning disabilities can be realized through the conceptualization of the role metacognition plays in the successful processing of information and literacy acquisition in the native language (L1). The aim of this present study is to examine the effects of metacognitive awareness and native literacy acquisition on EFL in an LD student.

Research has consistently shown (Ganschow, Sparks and Javorsky, 1998) that students with difficulties in their

native language also face problems in learning a foreign language. In order to understand their FL difficulties, it is important to study cognitive intervention in the process of literacy development starting in the native language. This article reports on a longitudinal study of a 17-year-old adolescent student within the mainstream education system in an EFL learning situation. The aim is to show how metacognition ties in with regular and dyslexic and/or learning-disabled students and provides a case for its importance in cognitive intervention. E.M. is an illustration of the development of literacy in a monolingual environment where one language is dominant and the second language is acquired through instruction (Brisk & Harrington, 2000). E.M.'s name has been altered to maintain confidentiality but the specific data on his learning disabilities and progress in learning have been accurately reported.

The Case Study

E.M. was an interesting subject because he displayed the typical characteristics of an adolescent with dyslexia with a comorbidity of an attention deficit disorder (ADD). His low self-esteem, poor self-regulatory and organizational ability, compounded with failure at school and a lack of motivation drew important cognitive concepts into a focus which could be examined. E.M.'s mother tongue is Hebrew where problems of directionality and a different orthography were exacerbated in learning English as a language.

Information was gathered from several open-ended learning related interviews with E.M.; from personal comments that were recorded as well as written appraisals in L1 at the end of the sessions. Facts were drawn from a narrative report written by an educational psychologist who diagnosed E.M.'s learning disability and from three recorded interviews conducted with his parents.

Understanding Dyslexia

When applying the metacognitive process to students with dyslexic characteristics it is important to analyse the underlying causation.

There are some broad categorizations of the underlying causation of dyslexia. The dyslexic person's disability may lie in **auditory perception**; giving the correct sounds to letters and digraphs, and/or **visual perception**; the recognition and recall of letters. Added to this there are the requirements of **sequencing** and **orientation**; arranging letters in the correct order when reading and subsequently when writing a word, and having most of the letters face a particular way. Each of these issues can present their own difficulties. For some dyslexic students a problem may be related to the association of meaning with the written word. A particular problem that arises

with the adolescent learner is where the academic level demands processing, absorbing and recalling a great deal of information. The adolescent with learning disabilities displays problems with memory including short-term, working and long-term memory. These memory related problems exacerbate the inability to function efficiently in the classroom. Lack of success causes "learned helplessness." The pupils who have a history of failure do not want to enter the learning situation because they have learned that they will fail. Instead they do not study and prefer to skip an examination as they then have a justifiable reason (Larkin and Ellis, 1998).

Understanding ADD/ADHD

In many cases people with dyslexia have a comorbidity with other learning disabilities. In the case being reported, the subject was diagnosed as having dyslexia with a comorbidity of ADD. There are some particular characteristics of adolescents with ADD/ADHD. They can be emotionally immature compared with their same-age peers, they show poor performance on tests and quizzes, they miss carrying out assignments, they project careless work, and poor writing. The emotional characteristics include becoming frustrated easily and having a "short fuse," with sudden outbursts of anger. Such people may be quick to panic and sometimes they are extremely shy. The adolescents procrastinate and, after having started a task, are distracted easily or have difficulty tracking and completing their projects, especially when the task requires a good deal of time and effort. These cognitive impairments become increasingly problematic during adolescence and may have widespread effects that often seem like behavioral problems rather than being recognized as part of the ADHD syndrome. In many cases the pupils who suffer from ADHD experience too much information, rather than too little, as a result of problems with the amount of sensory information entering the brain. Too much information can be a contributing factor to the impulsiveness and lack of rest displayed by this population of learners.

The Case Study

The case study of E.M. is used as a framework to connect the development of metacognition with improvements in learning. The comorbidity of dyslexia with ADD displayed by this student draws important cognitive concepts into focus and illustrates the significance of metacognitive training in turning failure into success (Goldfus, 2001). E.M. was convinced that he was a failure and a disappointment to his parents.

E.M.'s situation was particularly exacerbated by the fact that he was one of 40 students in an overcrowded classroom in a middle to upper- middle class public

secondary school culture i.e. an achievement-oriented society with the recognition and internalization by the school clientele that matriculation is essential for career and personal mobility. The catchment area of the school comprised families who, in general, could afford to provide private tuition for their children if needed. Within this society the learner who does not perform at the required level or is different from his peers in terms of personality and ability to cope is left behind and can readily feel isolated and alienated.

Prior to commencing this study, there had been no prior interventions for E.M. in terms of treatment, possibly because he did not present as a behavioral problem; indeed E.M.'s teachers considered him to be lazy. Neither was E.M.'s home environment conducive to success. E.M., the second oldest of four siblings, was faced with a situation where his other siblings performed at the required level. His older sister in particular was a successful student, thus placing additional pressure on E.M. and highlighting his disabilities.

It was not surprising therefore that E.M. had threatened to leave school in the 11th grade and drop out. He projected himself as a problem student; he withdrew into himself, he played truant and told lies to the teachers. He felt totally frustrated by the situation and was without hope for his betterment. Latterly E.M. had become destructive and had undermined the normal family functioning. Hormonal physiological changes exacerbated his deep-seated educational problems and contributed to a situation whereby the parents could no longer cope and felt they had failed in their parental role. They were at a loss where to turn and felt powerless and a sense of despair. At this point they determined that outside help was necessary to rectify the situation.

E.M. underwent an educational evaluation prior to beginning the intervention process. Tests revealed specific difficulties in the visual and auditory processing. His sequential auditory memory was found to be very weak; he could not hear the difference between vowels and consonants and was unable to persevere syllables. He showed problems with naming objects, with the retrieval of facts, together with problems in speed - all of which clearly identify the pupil with a reading disability. After an interval in the testing, it was found that his memory had deteriorated even further in that he was unable to remember what he had done previously. When he was under stress, he stopped working and refused to continue. He was also diagnosed as having an attention disability. He showed impulsivity, inability to discern main points and discard irrelevant information. Moreover, he was unable to do two activities simultaneously, could not complete all the assignments given to him, was easily

distracted, gave up and refused to continue. In contrast to this, he was able to compensate for other deficiencies by using strategies of association and categorization. Repetition of the material helped him to strengthen his memory.

The findings of the above assessment revealed a short-attention span and cognitive impulsivity. His learning problems were shown to be specifically language-related, including difficulties in his working memory, transfer and storage into long-term memory and subsequent retrieval. The evaluation thus showed the spiked profile of an adolescent with language-related disabilities and ADD without hyperactivity. E.M. had difficulties with processing information as a result of his dyslexia. He was unable to read fluently, accurately, retain information and he was unsuccessful in academic subjects where reading comprehension is essential, for example, history. Furthermore, his attention deficit meant that he could not sustain a period of intensive study and learning.

Training in Metacognition

Proficiency in the mother tongue was the initial goal before beginning intervention in English as a foreign language. E.M. was taught over a period of 18 months in one-to-one, hour-long sessions twice a week. He knew how to decode in Hebrew but showed extreme difficulty in processing information and did not understand what he read. He took a two-minute break every 5-10 minutes, since he seemed unable to sustain concentration for the full duration of the lesson. At first, E.M. had to understand and accept what is meant by a learning disability and dyslexia, so that he could take control of his studies. He had to understand himself, with his strengths and weaknesses (Wong, 1986). Further, to bolster a positive self-image, he was taught that all feelings are legitimate even feelings of total despair. Once he was able to understand and accept his strengths and weaknesses, an improvement in his studies was recorded. The first stage of training was to break the cycle of failure, and work with him concentrated on understanding and coping with what it means to fail. Failure was depersonalized (Wong, 1991). Once this had been achieved, intervention at a more practical level began. The aim of the intervention was to enable E.M. to take responsibility for his own studies (Wong 1991; Borkowski et al, 1989; Alexander et al., 1998; Butler, 1998; Larkin & Ellis, 1998).

E.M. initially did not appear to recognize when he failed to understand expository texts. He had to be made aware of when this breakdown occurs. Thus, the first stage in metacognitive development was "knowing when you know". (Brown,1980:458) In addition, he had to confront, understand and work out how to solve the problem. This involved knowing what he knew, what he

did not know and what he had to know. (ibid:459). By being able to assess his partial knowledge, he was able to assess the gaps and then ask for help (Reid, 1996). This process involved getting E.M. to 'externalise' his cognitive processing which involved changing the "passive" learner into an "active" one (Torgesen, 1998).

An important step in this rehabilitation process was being aware of what he needed to know (Brown, 1980:460) and where he stood in relation to the material he had to learn. This eliminated his saying "*I don't know anything*", or "*I am totally confused*", "*I'm going to fail*" and giving up. Through this metacognitive awareness and development of procedural knowledge (Alexander, Schallert & Hare, 1991), which included rereading and being able to extract the main point, his motivation improved as his understanding of the utility of active intervention (Brown 1980:461) was clarified. It was observed that E.M. found it difficult to focus his attention on the less well-mastered segments of material. This is important to note, because his inability to understand the material globally and what he had to do led to more specific difficulties. These difficulties included concentrating on the main ideas, selecting suitable retrieval cues and concentrating on information previously problematic (Brown, 1980; Baker & Brown, 1984). Thus, an additional aspect of intervention included organizational skills where he was taught to plan his time, concentrate on important information and construct meaning. (Brown, 1980:462)

After five months where the focus was on subjects in E.M.'s mother tongue, English as a foreign language could now be incorporated into the intervention. His working memory had improved as well as his performance in all subjects at school. However, he still manifested difficulties in English and had not achieved the required level. As reading comprehension is the main requirement in the matriculation examination (proficiency), intervention focused on comprehension rather than production.

According to second and foreign language researchers, a threshold level in the FL has to be attained before comprehension can be addressed (Alderson, 2000; Grabe, 2000). In order to move away from word-by-word translation, the intervention programme in EFL included a bidirectional programme of reading and listening, starting with a listening comprehension course (Goldfus & Ballas, 1989). This course is based on the premise that extracting information from a spoken text involves making sense of what is being said, as well as selecting and combining the relevant information. This systematic approach exposed E.M. to 'chunks' of texts in the foreign language and also focused on increasing vocabulary. E.M. reported that he hated listening comprehension as it

made him very tired and he found it very difficult. From the teaching logs monitoring his progress, E.M. gradually improved and was able to understand more and more. His concentration increased, he tired less and became more motivated. He was able to chunk and categorise information and his long-term memory improved in tests of retrieval (Swanson, Cooney & O'Shaughnessy, 1998), as reflected in his school tests.

One of the problems of the dyslexic learner is a lack of phonological awareness E.M. had been assessed as having a phonological core deficit. He was trained in phonological awareness by listening to two words where he had to identify whether the sounds he heard were the same or different. Initially he appeared not to hear a difference in most of the sounds and seemed to guess. He wrote "same" most of the time when he had difficulty, showing that most of the sounds sounded exactly the same to him. For example, he missed distinctions between 'warm' and 'worm', 'bend' and 'bent', 'thing' and 'think'. In order to help him focus and concentrate on listening, so as not to be distracted by other stimuli, the tape recorder was placed on the desk in front of him and he was left alone. He was told to look first at the written words and try to see their differences before he listened to them. After he had found the differences in writing, he listened to them. It was found that he could advance when he had to listen, repeat and read simultaneously the words or sentences. He now was doing several activities simultaneously, something which had seemed impossible at the beginning. An explanation of this improvement could be that language learning is partly a matter of sensitizing the student to the fine detail of language through exposure and metacognitive teaching.

The didactic assessment showed that E.M. focused on lower-level processing rather than higher-level (Wong, 1986).

E.M. seemed able to function best when texts were simple and questions were straightforward. However, when he was given a more difficult text, the new situation caused him to revert to previous patterns. In this case breakdown occurred where no transfer to monitor and understand failure took place. In order to understand the text for meaning (Baker, 1984a; 1984b), a different kind of cognitive intervention was necessary.

Metacognitive training in isolation does not automatically lead to enhanced learning. Thus, at the point where E.M. was able to understand and accept his difficulties, intervention could now focus very strongly on the academic subjects. At this point his difficulties in text processing were monitored. It was difficult for E.M. to focus his attention on the less well-mastered segments of

material. His inability to understand the material globally and to be cognisant of what he had to accomplish led to more specific difficulties and at that point a 'blackout' occurred and learning stopped.

The issues that manifested themselves in reading long texts included a difficulty in being able to isolate the main ideas, select suitable retrieval cues and concentrate on the integration of earlier information. Thus, the next stage of the metacognitive process needed to be the development of self-efficacy and the metacognitive intervention included intensive training on organizational skills. E.M. was taught to plan his time, to concentrate on the more important information and on the construction of meaning. (Brown, 1980:462) At the same time he was trained in the tools for comprehension monitoring; he had to stop when he was aware that he no longer understood what he was reading.

Before intervention, E.M.'s teachers reported that he could not compose and write a sustained piece of work in any subject. Through mind-mapping, through the organization of his thoughts and ideas, and by slowly building up schemata, he was taught how to write a composition in his mother tongue and then, much later, in English. The fact that E.M. subsequently achieved success over time supports the view that training in metacognitive awareness and cognition can be applied to many school subjects. It was observed that he progressively gained in self-confidence and this showed how an appreciation of self, led to intrinsic motivation (Wong, 1986). At this point E.M. displayed enthusiasm and a will to succeed. He had broken through the 'turning point' barrier.

Notwithstanding the noticeable improvements in his functioning in the classroom brought about by cognitive intervention, E.M. still focused on lower-level processing rather than higher-level (Wong, 1986). In order to overcome this, many texts were recorded and he was able to listen to the words and read them at the same time. He was encouraged to look up any words that were problematic in the Quicktionary (an electronic-scanning dictionary). At the end of each paragraph he stopped the tape and was asked to write down the main idea in Hebrew in one sentence thus enforcing comprehension monitoring and conciseness of information. There was constant and necessary recourse to oral language in Hebrew (L1) since the main aim at this point was to teach E.M. reading comprehension. E.M. seemed able to answer best those questions that required literal information. Questions that required inference were found to be very difficult. His ability to find the main ideas from a text gradually improved, but he needed

further training in how to reconstruct the main ideas in his own words.

"Learning a new language, like all learning, requires accommodation of new structures into existing ones. Thus, bilinguals do not function as two monolinguals shutting off one language while using the other, but as an integrated individual with two active languages affecting each other and serving as efficient resources for communication." (Brisk & Harrington, 2000:7)

Several texts varying in difficulties based on syntax and lexis were chosen for the experiment. E.M. was free to return to earlier sections of the text as needed for clarification. At the end of the passage, the text was taken away and he was asked to recount everything he could remember from the text and identify the main idea of the passage. This demanded memory and construction of meaning from the various parts of the text. By focusing on the main ideas and by understanding syntactic structure, he was able to move on to the higher-level processing of meaning construction.

As has been mentioned previously, one of the particular characteristics of the adolescent with ADD is the inability to cope with the stress and the difficulties that are manifested during formal examinations. From the time that E.M. was able to feel more positive, and when he coped better in the classroom and had gradually become more open, the issue of studying for examinations needed to become an important focus. Reading the questions, planning and organizing the answers under examination conditions became the subject of the therapy sessions. One of the main characteristics of the person with ADD is impulsivity. E.M. was taught to plan his answers and only when he had thought through his response would he then attempt to answer the questions. This reversal of attitude and approach involved utilising the different aspects of the metacognitive training that he had undergone.

As mother tongue acquisition causes difficulties in the child with dyslexia, these difficulties are compounded in the foreign language setting. Initially, E.M. was exposed to listening comprehension (Goldfus & Ballas, 1989), which simultaneously demanded vocabulary acquisition, memory training and language processing. Vocabulary is taught by gradually introducing new and key words thematically. Language is acquired through exposure thus training in the foreign language began through listening comprehension, following and reading texts. As mentioned, initially E.M. disliked listening comprehension tasks and found them exhausting.

E.M. was given carefully graded questions so as to place him in the monitoring/control situation (Goldfus, 2001). As a direct result of this, his concentration gradually increased, he tired less and became more motivated. After completing the first ten units of the course, he revised the vocabulary, repeated several key units and checked to see if he had improved (monitoring). He was able to chunk and categorise information and his long-term memory improved in tasks requiring information retrieval as reflected in his schoolwork. The methodology described above provided 'scaffolding' and E.M. was 'cued in how to learn' (Bruner, 1986). At all stages, he had to reflect on his learning and to assess himself.

It is a characteristic of adolescents with learning disabilities that they are unable to evaluate their own performance accurately. They either overrate themselves and then blame the teacher, or they underrate themselves and feel that no matter how much effort they invest, they will always fail. Because E.M. lacked both the awareness of his own level of knowledge and the monitoring skills, he had expected to fail. Although he was improving in his learning, he found it difficult to assess his progress accurately and understanding how to remediate his performance failures (Baker & Brown, 1984b). Once E.M. was able to cope with a difficult and stressful situation, in this case learning a foreign language, intervention could now concentrate on reading comprehension and writing and the acquisition of literacy in the foreign language.

Discussion

It is argued that intervention takes place through the strengths rather than the weaknesses of the student. This study supports the contention that lack of success at school in language-related subjects undermines confidence and leads to task avoidance. The approach explained in the case study of E.M. argues that the development of metacognition, together with exposure to the academic texts or language in EFL exposed E.M. to all the different kinds of expository learning texts that he needed in order to succeed within the academic setting. The teaching emphasized information-processing and comprehension rather than focusing only on the basic skills.

Metacognitive training was contextualized through the national curriculum. In the final examinations, E.M. passed with an above-average mark in English (four points) and succeeded in his other subjects. By the time he finished school, his recorded discussions showed that he had a more positive self-image, a belief in himself as well as an awareness of his strengths and his weaknesses. Asked about his disabilities and difficulties, he answered

that he was aware of what it meant to have a learning disability. Through the development of metacognition, he was able to achieve his own goals as well as cope with most of the external ones. If he failed, he felt that he could monitor why he had failed.

Conclusion

This study is a pilot investigation, which advocates the efficacy of initial training in metacognition through the native language to literacy including reading comprehension in English as a foreign language. It is not an empirical report of a case study, but an attempt to address the adolescent student with concomitant learning disabilities from a different point of view. Research on linguistic/cognitive difficulties has shown that students with language learning disabilities are ill-equipped to meet the language and learning demands of the classroom. This case study has shown that systematic training in metacognition can be termed "cognitive rehabilitation". Successful cognitive rehabilitation breaks the cycle of failure, allowing the student to succeed learning in general and language learning specifically although the latter needs more focused and rigorous intervention.. It is proposed that empirical research be carried out in a classroom situation to validate the use of cognitive rehabilitation in the successful development of literacy in adolescents.

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LANGUAGE AND ITS RELATION TO READING PROBLEMS: What teachers need to know about the structure of written English to teach reading

Dr. Peggy Barzilay (*peggyb@bezeqint.net*)

The reading problems that exist in our classrooms today are normally attributed to three main causes:

1. specific problems relating to individual students (learning disabilities, emotional problems),
2. the environment in which a student is raised and learns English (homes where books do not play an important role), and
3. instructional factors.

While the problems of individual students or the environment in which they learn to read play a role the cause that hits closest to home, certainly for teachers, is the instructional factor. In fact, it has been argued “that children’s reading problems are due, to a large degree, to the failure on the part of professionals to apply what we know about effective instruction.” (Taylor and Ysseldyke, 2007).

Effective instruction requires, among other things, explicit explanations of the basic components of reading such as phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, fluency and vocabulary (NICHHUD, 2000). The problem is that these explicit explanations, which are so vital for effective instruction, are not possible without knowledgeable, informed teachers. As a result, despite the existence of phonics instruction, for example, in our classrooms, it is not always successful because some teachers simply do not have the knowledge necessary to provide explicit phonics instruction.

The result of a long-term study carried out several years ago by the National Institute of Health in the U.S. supports this conclusion. This study concentrated not on methodology or grammar, but on what teachers know or do not know about important aspects of the English language which are necessary for teaching reading such as: 1. the speech sounds themselves, 2. how the letters of the alphabet relate to the speech sounds of English, 3. syllable types and patterns, and 4. morphology.

Despite the importance of these topics, results of this study indicated that 90% of teachers had little knowledge of these areas and therefore had no idea how to teach reading to children who did not get it automatically (Moats, 1994). Unfortunately, these results are, for the most part, still relevant today because too many teachers are unaware of the problems inherent in the written transcription of English and do not know how letters, the written symbols used in English, relate to the sounds they represent.

Learning to read depends upon the acquisition of two basic skills: the ability to decode or sound out words and the ability to derive meaning from a text. Certainly the purpose or goal of reading is to derive meaning from a text. But to do this, pupils have to be able to read the individual words that make up a text. And to do that, they have basically two choices open to them:

1. they can memorize the words, or
2. learn to decode.

Of these two choices, learning to decode is the more realistic, because, even though memorization may work well in the beginning grades, pupils soon reach a point where, due to the size of the English lexicon, they have no choice but to learn how to decode in order to decipher words they have never seen before.

Learning to decode requires that children learn the letters of the alphabet and how and under what circumstances, they represent the different sounds used in English. However, this is problematic for many students because English has no fully functional one to one correspondence between sounds and the letters used to represent them. Ten out of the 26 letters of the English language represent more than one sound. These include all of the vowels and most of the vowel combinations. Some children have no problem with these idiosyncrasies. They manage to work out the relationship between letters and the sounds they represent on their own. However, others are not able to do this and need guidance. Therefore, it is our job as teachers to be specific when teaching pupils which sound or sounds are appropriate in any given circumstance and why.

How do we go about doing this? What, exactly, do our pupils need to know to become proficient readers? In addition to the names to the letters of the alphabet, they have to know:

1. that the English alphabet consists of 26 letters (5 vowels and 21 consonants)
2. that there are five consonant letters (c, g, s, x, and y) which can represent more than one sound
3. that the letter ‘y’, which is normally a consonant, can also function as a vowel
4. that all vowel letters represent more than one sound.

Moreover, our pupils also have to know:

5. the sounds that letters represent, as well as when these letters represent a particular sound and why

6. about syllable types and patterns because knowledge of syllable types provides important insights as to how to pronounce the vowel within the syllable
7. about various letter combinations and the sounds they represent.

Time and space limitations prevent the discussion of all these areas. Therefore, the remainder of this article will deal with the five consonant letters which represent more than one sound. Please note that while I discuss many possibilities with relation to these five letters, it is up to teachers to decide, based on the needs of students' texts, what to present and when.

The letter 'c'

Students have to be taught that the letter 'c' can represent, when used either alone or in combination with another letter, four different sounds: /k/, /s/, /sh/, /ch/

1. **C and c combinations representing the sound /k/**
 - a. If 'c' is followed by the letters a, o, u, or consonants such as k, r and l, it normally says /k/ as in *cat, cot, cut* and *lack, crack, and clock*.
 - b. 'C' in combination with 'k' says /k/. This normally occurs at the end of a one syllable word, before a short vowel (*back, sick, stuck*).
 - c. 'C' in combination with the letter 'h' normally represents the sound /k/ in words of Greek origin (*chemistry, chaos*). This combination should be given to older students.
2. **C representing the sound /s/:**

If 'c' is followed by e, i, or y, it normally says the sound /s/ as in *city, center cycle*.
3. **C representing the sound /ch/:**

C followed by the letter 'h' normally represents the sound /ch/ as in the word *chair*. When students are first introduced to this combination, only the sound /ch/ should be given.
4. **C representing the sound /sh/:**
 - a. The letter 'c' followed by the letter 'i' and another vowel, in an unstressed syllable, normally says /sh/ as in *magician, social, official*.
 - b. Occasionally, the letter 'c' followed by the letter 'e' can also be used to represent the /sh/ sound if the letter 'e' is followed by another vowel as in *ocean*. (Bishop, 1986).

The letter 'g'

Students need to be taught that the letter 'g' represents 2 sounds /g/ and /j/.

- a. 'G' followed by a, o, or u, normally says /g/ as in *go, gun or gamble*.

- b. 'G' followed by e, i, or y, normally says /j/ as in *gentle, gin, gypsy*.

Here, I would like to make a comment about exceptions like *girl* or *get*. Exceptions are ever present in English. In fact, exceptions exist to the point that many teachers avoid giving rules, not just because they feel that some readers have difficulty dealing with rules, but because they feel that exceptions reduce or eliminate the value of these rules. While it is true that rules are problematic because of the exceptions involved, without them, pupils are left with no tools for deciphering words that they have never seen before for. In other words, rules, even though there are exceptions, help students read new words and therefore provide a means of limiting or controlling the amount of information that they have to memorize.

The best way to deal with exceptions is through the use of a card system. Not every student will need this card system, but for those who do, these cards are indispensable. The purpose of these cards is to reinforce or review what has been taught in class and just about any information can be put on them.

For example, with reference to the exceptions to G + e, i, y, = /j/, g = /j/ is put on the front of the card and the rule G + e, i, y = /j/ is put on the back. Examples are given and then words pupils have come across in their texts which are exceptions are placed underneath the rule. Pupils are supposed to look at the front of the card and recall the information on the back. If they don't remember, they look at the back of the card. The fact that they have to look at the back of the card to recall the information, immediately tells them that this information needs more work. Using notebooks for review is not the same because, in essence, both the question and answer appear on the same page, and therefore a pupil has no way of really knowing whether he or she has really internalized the material.

Front	Back
G = /j/	G + e, i, y = /j/ as in:
	Gentle
	Giraffe
	Gypsy
	exceptions
	Girl
	Get
	Give

The letter ‘s’

The letter ‘s’ normally represents two basic sounds /s/ and /z/.

S representing the sound /s/

1. At the beginning of a word, the letter ‘s’ normally says /s/.
2. At the end of a word, the single letter ‘s’ can say either the /s/ or the /z/ sound depending on the letter which appears before it.
 - a. If the letter appearing before the ‘s’ represents a voiced sound, the ‘s’ is pronounced /z/. *beds* /z/
 - b. If the letter before the s’ represents an unvoiced sound, the ‘s’ is normally pronounced /s/ as in *boats*.

The concept of voicing can be presented to students in a relatively simple manner. For elementary school students, it is enough to tell them that some letters in English are “noisy”, while others aren’t. To tell which is which, all you have to do is cover your ears and say the sound. For example: p/b which letter is noisy? Older students can be told that voicing occurs when the vocal cords are in motion. To check particular letters, have them say the sounds represented by these and ask where they feel the vibration. **Note:** Double ‘ss’ at the end of a word normally says /s/ as in *pass*.

3. S in the middle of a word:
 - a. S in the middle of a word normally says /s/ as in *horsy, hoist*
 - b. However, S with one vowel before it and one vowel after it normally says /z/ as in *present*. Notice in the word *house*, there are two vowels before the S, so it says /s/.

The letter ‘x’

The letter ‘x’ can represent three different sounds: /z/, /ks/, and /egz/.

1. At the beginning of a word, the letter ‘x’ represents the sound /z/ as is xylophone or xerox.
2. At the end or in the middle of a word, the letter ‘x’ can represent either the sounds /ks/ as in fox or /egz/ as in exam. The difference between these two sounds is minimal and usually occurs to facilitate pronunciation. There may even be students who do not even hear the difference, and there is no need for teachers to stress this point. But it is important for them to be aware of this difference, should questions arise.

The letter ‘y’

The letter ‘Y’ not only represents different sounds, but can also function as both a vowel and a consonant.

1. Y at the beginning of a word or syllable, normally functions as a consonant (*yellow, backyard*).
2. If the letter ‘y’ appears in the middle of a word, other than a compound word, it is normally a word of Greek origin. In this case, the ‘y’ normally replaces the ‘i’ sound as in *myth*.
3. Y at the end of a word normally functions as a vowel and can be either long or short depending on where the stress in the word is.
 - a. If Y at the end of a word is in an unstressed syllable, the ‘y’ represents the short sound /I/ as in *jelly*.
 - b. If ‘y’ at the end of word is in a stressed syllable, the ‘y’ represents the long /i/ sound as in *deny* or *defy*.

The information in this article may seem complex, however, this is information that students need to become proficient readers and therefore, this is information that teachers must have so that they can teach it to their students when the appropriate occasion arises. Some of the information is basic (when the letter ‘c’ says /k/ and when it says /s/) and should be introduced relatively soon for all students. Other information (when the letter ‘y’ says /i/ in the middle of a word) should be introduced when students come across this in their reading material. All of the information, however, must be at the disposal of reading teachers so that they can provide the instruction necessary for proficient readers.

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GUIDED DISCOVERY, READING, AND THE STUDENT DIAGNOSED WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES:

How to use the Guided Discovery technique to enhance decoding skills

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Two basic principles are relevant to successful teaching in general and the special needs of students diagnosed with learning disabilities in particular:

- 1) Never assume that your students know what you have not explicitly taught them, and
- 2) Never assume that because you have taught them, they know.

To become proficient readers, students have to be taught how to read words that they have never seen before. The best way to do this is to provide systematic, explicit instruction in decoding skills. This type of instruction is important for all students, but it is vital for the learning disabled. Learning disabled students often find it difficult to intuit on their own and need rules or generalizations which provide a framework within which to work. However, these same students may find it difficult to work with the rules they need. Therefore, how these rules or generalizations are presented becomes a vital factor to their success. This is where the Guided Discovery technique becomes particularly useful.

Guided Discovery is based on the principle that if you can get students to “discover” the information they need to know, it will be easier for them to understand and remember this information. To achieve this goal, the Guided Discovery technique uses a series of leading questions. As students answer these questions, they come up with the information necessary to formulate the rules they need and as a result, they usually find it easier to remember these rules and generalizations. It is important to note, however, that any discussion of memory, as it relates to student needs, requires a distinction between information which has to be memorized (names and dates) and information which has to be understood (rules and principles). There is no need for comprehension where names and dates are concerned and therefore, this information has to be memorized. However, some information like rules for example, has to be understood to be used successfully and this is where the techniques used in the Guided Discovery method can be particularly helpful.

The two examples given in this article:

1. “Using guided discovery to teach closed syllables”, and
2. “Using guided discovery to distinguish between ‘c’ = /k/ and ‘c’ = /s/”, illustrate how Guided Discovery can be used to teach information which needs to be understood as opposed to memorized .

Using Guided Discovery to teach closed syllables

Each of the vowel letters in English (a, e, i, o, and u) can represent at least two different sounds, one long (ate, even) and the other short (sat, set, sit). This creates a problem for many readers who do not know which sound a vowel represents within any particular word. One way around this is to teach students about syllable types because knowledge of syllable types gives students important information on how to pronounce the vowel within the syllables which make up words. The first syllable type normally taught is the closed syllable.

Introducing the concept of closed syllables, like all other new material, should be based on what has already been taught in class. Therefore, teachers who want to introduce closed syllables should start by reviewing long and short vowels and then introduce the concept of a syllable. For vowels, it is enough that students know that long vowels say their name (I, me, so etc.). Short vowels, however, have to be taught:

ă = at
ĕ = elephant
ĭ = in
ŏ = octopus
ŭ = umbrella

* The half circle above a vowel letter indicates that the vowel sound is short. A straight line above a vowel indicates that the vowel sound is long.

To teach the concept of a syllable to younger pupils, it is normally enough to clap out their names, telling them that each clap represents a syllable (*Dan*, *A/dam*, *Mar/ga/lit*). Older students can be given the definition “Syllables are either small words or parts of bigger words which contain one sounded vowel”. For example: boat is a one syllable word because, despite the fact that it contains two vowels, only one vowel sound is heard. Some students like and can work well with definitions. However, for those who have difficulty working with definitions, the same procedure as that is used for younger pupils can be given.

Once vowels have been reviewed and the concept of the syllable introduced, teachers can then ask students how they would know whether a vowel is long or short in a word that they have never seen before. Most students will not be able to answer. Teachers should then explain that knowledge of different syllable types will give students some of the answers they need and proceed with the introduction of closed syllables.

To introduce closed syllables, start by giving students a list of one syllable words:

cap rob tin cub trot is
can red it mug men am

Tell students that these words are all closed syllables. Then ask them what these words have in common. In the beginning, when you first ask this question, students may not understand what you are looking for. Should this be the case, ask the following questions:

1. How many syllables are there in each word. (*I*)
If students aren't sure, read the list of words and ask them how many syllables they hear. They can also be asked to clap out the words.
2. Do these words end in a consonant or a vowel? (*a consonant*)
3. How many vowel sounds there are in each of these words. (*I*)
4. Now read the words in the list and ask if the vowels are long or short. (*short*)

Then ask: who can put all this information together and come up with a definition of a closed syllable? Teachers should be looking for a *definition* similar to the following:

“A closed syllable is a one syllable word, or part of a longer word, ending in a consonant. It has only one vowel sound and that vowel sound is short.”

The fact that the vowel sound in closed syllables is usually short, is the important piece of information that you are looking for. For more information on this subject, go to: <http://www.etni.org.il/etnirag/issue1/peggy-barzilay.htm>

Using Guided Discovery to distinguish between ‘c’ = /k/ and ‘c’ = /s/

How to distinguish when the letter ‘c’ represents the sound /k/ and when the letter ‘c’ represents the sound /s/, can also be taught using Guided Discovery. Start by presenting students with a list of one syllable words all containing the letter ‘c’ representing the sound /k/.

color slick card clan cut
can clock come cute lack
crack cub cult candy club

1. Asking students what these words have in common will probably lead to the answer: “*They all start with the letter ‘c’.*” Once this has been established, ask students to look at the letter or letters following the letter ‘c’. You are looking for the fact that ‘c’ is followed, in all these words, by the letters a, o, u, k, l or r.

2. Then ask students to pay attention to the sound the letter ‘c’ represents as you read the words.
3. Ask students what sound the letter ‘c’ represents. */k/*
4. Then give students another list of words which contain the letter ‘c’ saying */s/*. Read the words while asking students to pay attention to the sound the letter ‘c’ represents.
city center cycle cyclone
cypress cell censor civic civil
5. Ask students to look at the letters following the letter ‘c’. (e, i, y)

Now ask students if they can come up with a rule indicating when ‘c’ represents the sound /k/ and when it represents the sound /s/. Teachers should be looking for the following information:

- a. If ‘c’ is followed by the letters a, o, u or consonants such as k, r and l, it normally says /k/ as in cat, cot, cut and lack, crack, and clock
- b. If ‘c’ is followed by the letters e, i, and y, it normally represents the sound /s/ as in city, center, cycle.

To become proficient readers, students need to know how to read the individual words which make up a text. Being able to do this is facilitated by the ability to understand and use certain rules or generalizations. For some LD students this can represent a problem. However, if this information is presented using the Guided Discovery technique, students should be able to come up with these rules or generalizations on their own. Although using Guided Discovery may, in the beginning, take a bit more classroom time, it is ‘cost effective’ in the sense that it facilitates comprehension which makes it easier for students to remember. This, in turn, should increase their self-confidence making classroom life that much easier for all concerned.

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VISION-RELATED LEARNING PROBLEMS – A REVIEW

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“... to completely analyze what we do when we read would almost be the acme of a psychologist’s achievements, for it would be to describe very many of the most intricate workings of the human mind, as well as to unravel the tangled story of the most remarkable specific performance that civilization has learned in all its history.” – Huey (1908, p. 6)

It is always a good time to go over some fundamentals about **vision and learning**. This is because 100% of the words your student reads need to enter the eyes and pass through a very complicated visual system before the brain begins to engage in visual and phonological processing.

Eyesight and Vision

Eyesight is simply the ability to see something clearly, the so-called 6/6 (20/20) eyesight. This is usually measured in a standard eye examination with a Snellen test-chart.

Vision goes beyond eyesight and can best be defined as the understanding of what is seen. Vision involves the ability to take incoming visual information, process that information and obtain meaning from it.

Reading

Over 80% of learning uses the visual system. It is the gateway through which the written word passes. In order to read accurately and understand, the student needs to have well-developed **eye teaming**, **eye tracking** and **focusing** skills. The eyes need to be able to team, track and focus effortlessly, for long periods of time whilst the brain simultaneously processes the information. When a person can do this, they have automaticity in vision. Developing these skills to the level that matches the demand of efficient reading does not always occur naturally. Reading is perhaps the hardest thing we demand from our visual system on a daily basis. People are not fully aware as to the degree that visual efficiency affects our ability to read efficiently. However, if you think about it, you can see quite what an unnatural task

reading is. When do we ever have to perform a task that requires complete simultaneous coordination of our legs? We walk in an alternating pattern. We use our stronger hand for more motorically challenging tasks. But when we read we demand parity in the focusing, and tracking skills of our eyes. Naturally we all have a stronger side on which we can demonstrate better motor control. Most healthy people have visual skills sufficient for walking along the street, for picking apples or for catching a ball. However many do not have efficient vision skills. They may be able to read but perhaps they do not enjoy it. Problems with visual inefficiency can affect how quickly we read, and the level of our reading-comprehension. Let’s compare this with swimming. Many people know how to swim. Some swim quite well. Fewer swim very well. If you watch people swim you will see that many do not have motor equivalence; one hand moves better than the other leading to inefficiency.

Do you remember when you first learned to drive? You couldn’t think about all the errands you needed to do, speak on your phone and drive at the same time. Well, if you can do that today, it’s because you have automaticity in driving. Some children **can** read but **cannot** understand at the same time. They might be working too hard at the mechanics of eye-teaming, eye-tracking and focusing preventing the higher levels of phonological processing and comprehension from carrying out their task.

Therefore, if your student (or you!) can remember what is read to them but not what is read by them, they may have a **vision-related learning problem**.

After coming to attention, the next stage of processing is that the visual form (grapheme) of each letter and vowel needs to be recognized accurately and rapidly. If this is poor, reading will be poor. There may be other problems but the visual issues must be taken care of first. As reading progresses, we learn to visually recognize more words in the very same way that we recognize faces and objects. It is just much more difficult because of the size of the words, and because the letter shapes are relatively similar. A fluent reader requires visual discrimination skills that are very well developed. Doing jigsaw puzzles is an activity that helps basic visual discrimination skills.

Spelling

Some students copy from the board with spelling mistakes e.g. becoz instead of because, telephone instead

of telephone. Why is this? They obviously read the word, otherwise they would not be writing anything down on the paper. What they have written **sounds** correct, but does not **look** correct. These students have a deflected processing style. They easily remember what the word sounds like but have a more difficult time remembering what the word **looks** like. The most efficient way to recognize if a word is spelled correctly is if you know what it looks like. This depends on having a well-developed visual memory. This in turn is dependent on having efficient eye-teaming, focusing and tracking skills that are developed to the appropriate level required for reading. If they are not well developed then a bright child who wants to learn will try and learn everything through listening, as a result of which his visual processing skills will not develop adequately. The child who has difficulty remembering what words look like might be able to visually recall what his bedroom looks like, or even the pattern on his cereal bowl. Remembering what **words** look like is perhaps the hardest visual-recall task. This can be greatly enhanced through Optometric Vision Therapy.

Handwriting

Though it is true that your student may be hypo or hyper tonic or have a grapho-motor problem, one cannot forget that the guidance system for movement in the human being is the **visual** system. When we learn to form letters, we use our visual system. We first observe the letter, then we build up an internal representation of that letter using visual processing skills, and finally we try to mimic its visual form using fine motor control to direct our fingers whilst holding a pen. If your student is holding the pen tightly, it may be because that is the only way they can feel it whilst they are trying hard to focus on the page. They are using too much effort for vision and cannot carry out the fine motor movements required for writing.

AD(H)D

Any evaluation for AD(H)D or learning difficulties involves the use of the visual system. Any inefficiency in the visual system, i.e. problems with eye focusing, tracking or teaming will affect the diagnosis. This is a problem that is impossible to avoid if the eyes are being used in testing (which they are). Unfortunately, this issue is not being addressed. As teachers you can address the issue and find out to what extent poor visual efficiency is contributing to your student's problem. The differential diagnosis between ADD and poor vision skills is impossible to make without a full vision evaluation by a Developmental Optometrist. A number of children who had been diagnosed with ADD, and were on medication for it, did not enjoy reading and as a result of appropriate vision care, have come off medication and are enjoying

reading. However, you need to **know** if that is the case for your student.

Children who are in occupational or physical therapy may benefit from vision therapy. These therapies all complement one another and if the visual system is working well it will facilitate the other therapies. If not, it may be making things harder for the therapist and for the child.

Remember:

- Make a full vision evaluation the first step in the evaluation of a student with reading difficulties. It is the **beginning** of the whole learning process.
- Let's understand and respect the great challenges that reading presents to the visual system.
- Let's ensure that our students have good, **sustainable** visual **eye-teaming, tracking** and **focusing** skills.
- Let's ensure they can use their eyes whilst **simultaneously** carrying out a cognitive task.
- Let's make sure their visual processing skills are well developed.

Because the visual problems mentioned in this article are mostly remediable, following these steps will save much time for you, and give a brighter future for the child with learning-related vision problems.

Useful websites

www.covd.org, www.oep.org,
www.ledermanvision.com

Robert Lederman (MCOptom FCOVD) is a leader in the field of Developmental Optometry. He was Israel's first board-certified Fellow of the College of Optometrists in Vision Development (www.covd.org), is a clinical associate of the Optometric Extension Program (www.oep.org) and is on the Professional Advisory Group of the Kabuki Syndrome Network (www.kabukisynndrome.com/professional.html)

He lectures extensively across the country to audiences ranging from teachers in special education attending a course of the British Dyslexia Association, to the head-injury rehabilitation staff at the Tel Hashomer hospital. He is recognized as an authority in understanding the unique differences in the visual demands and skills required when reading two different languages such as Hebrew and English. It is this knowledge that is turned into practice at The Vision Center, Jerusalem where so many people find solutions to their vision-related problems, sometimes after years of being told that their vision is just fine.

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MYTHS RELATED TO DICTIONARY USE WITH DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING STUDENTS

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Learning one's first language when your hearing is impaired is a complicated task. Learning a foreign language, especially vocabulary acquisition, is very difficult indeed. Using a dictionary – first a homemade one, then a standard printed one and finally (when eligible) an electronic dictionary – enables the hearing impaired student to become an independent learner who can fulfill their potential. The dictionary should be an integral part of the student's equipment, along with the course book and pencil box. Students should be permitted to use it during class work, and (particularly from 7th grade) on tests.

In this article I attempt to refute some of the main "myths" on which teachers base their refusal to allow use of the dictionary in class.

Myth no. 1: "Using a dictionary gives the hearing impaired student an unfair advantage over the hearing students."

First of all, professionals who work with Deaf and Hard of Hearing students find it difficult to imagine how a student who is learning English without hearing the language at all, or in a distorted matter, could have an advantage over a hearing student!

Our goal as teachers is to enable each and every student to reach a level of proficiency that enables use of the language in different aspects of life. The students in every class aren't "equal" in any case: they have different abilities, difficulties and skills. Making the "unfair advantage" claim is similar to a child's sense of "fair", such as dividing a cookie or taking turns in a game. In education, "fairness" is giving each child the optimal conditions to fulfill his potential. If the hearing impaired child can reach proficiency in the material using a dictionary, that's a huge achievement which doesn't interfere with the hearing student achieving proficiency.

Myth no. 2: "It's too easy – using a dictionary will "give" all the answers to the student."

The English language is not a simple language: many words have multiple meanings, use of idioms is common and the grammatical structure of the language is very different from Hebrew. A student needs a command of syntax and grammar in order to choose the right dictionary entry for a given context. In addition, the student must be able to think in a flexible manner when translating and reorganizing words translated into meaningful chunks.

Consider the following sentence:

When Dan arrived he found out that there was no room in the car left for him.

If a student chooses the first meaning appearing in the dictionary for every word in this sentence they will come up with a totally incomprehensible sentence. The resulting Hebrew translation will appear as a jumble of unrelated words, including "left" as a direction, "room" as rooms in a building, while "found" isn't recognized as a verb and becomes separated from "out".

Knowledge is required in order to use a dictionary efficiently and correctly – using it mechanically will not improve a student's results. In addition, a student who hasn't studied at all and looks up every single word in the dictionary will not finish the exam in the allotted time, even with "extra time".

Myth no. 3: "The student doesn't need a dictionary, they can ask me – I (the teacher) will supply any translation needed."

Encouraging the student to rely on the teacher for translations is very problematic, both from an emotional viewpoint and an academic one.

Many hearing impaired students do not want to draw attention to themselves and would rather get a low grade than ask a teacher anything at all. For example, a common phenomenon among these students is nodding "Yes" to show that they understand even when they don't have a clue. Other students will ask for help countless times during a test – English is difficult for them and why should they deal with problems if help is so easily supplied? This is particularly problematic in the context of a test. Neither type of student develops into an independent learner; independent learners can rely on themselves and their trusty dictionaries, which is difficult for both types of students.

In addition, when a teacher supplies the translation for a word, the translation is the suitable one for the relevant context. When a student looks up a word on their own, they must apply knowledge of syntax and relate to the context in order to choose the most suitable definition. Here the teacher is doing that for the student.

Myth no. 4: "No technology please – a printed dictionary is always better for the student."

When discussing electronic dictionaries, it is important to relate to high-quality dictionaries. There is no list of approved electronic dictionaries and some teachers have formed negative opinions of electronic dictionaries based on experiences with poor quality ones. A good one includes a large vocabulary, phrases and phrasal verbs.

The main advantages of an electronic dictionary are speed and ease of use. The large Oxford dictionary with its small print and bulk is intimidating. Some students feel despair when they see it. The electronic dictionary is small, shows you one word at a time very quickly and, as a representative of the technological age, is attractive to the younger generation. Since vocabulary is the most challenging issue for these students, many look up a large number of words. It is infinitely more frustrating to do so with a printed dictionary, even when you are a competent dictionary user.

Like any tool, using an electronic dictionary is only beneficial after practicing its correct use and becoming familiar with all its functions. On the other hand, because the electronic dictionary is so easy to use, it is important not to allow students to use it an early age. The printed dictionary is not attractive enough for a fifth grade student to want to look up the word “supermarket” instead of trying to read it on their own. Use of electronic dictionaries should be permitted (for those eligible)

around 8th or 9th grade, when the students begin to deal with longer texts which include larger numbers of unknown words.

Conclusion:

The dictionary is an important tool for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. Using the printed dictionary or the electronic one correctly and efficiently can significantly help a student improve their level of English. In fact, the only thing we can say for sure that isn't a myth regarding dictionary use is that electronic dictionaries are expensive!

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READING, GRAMMAR AND LEARNING DISABILITIES

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Introduction: Noun phrases (NPs) and their role in academic texts

If I mention the word “grammar” to you, chances are that the first thing that comes to your mind is the verb system, namely tenses. However, if you look at reading comprehension passages that students have to cope with from the 9th grade on you will find that the tenses constitute a minimal obstacle to reading comprehension or none at all. The real obstacles to comprehension are the noun phrases (Lewis, 1997:181). Noun phrases (NPs) in academic texts are often long and complex. They are complex because they refer to the abstract and complicated notions and processes that academic texts are about. There can be no real understanding of academic texts without the ability to decode NPs. Unfortunately, while some students acquire this ability intuitively, students diagnosed with learning disabilities (LD), along with quite a few non-LD students, need direct instruction in identifying NPs. The purpose of this article is to raise teachers' awareness of the need to teach NPs as part of

their reading comprehension instruction and to provide some ideas of how to do so specifically with pupils with LD or those at risk for reading difficulties.

The structure of NPs and their distribution in academic texts

Consider the following excerpts from the textbook *Approaching 4* (p. 21, 23):

1. **Violence among pupils in schools** is increasing at **a shocking rate**. There are **a number of reasons for violence in schools**.
2. ... since **the beginning of mass media**, **gossip** has been linked to **technology** and **has also become a very profitable industry**. **Hundreds of magazines, television talk shows and websites** are dedicated to **it**. **Most major newspapers** have **gossip columns**. What **better proof** is there of **gossip's great popularity**?

The expressions in bold are noun phrases (NPs). NPs are phrases that consist of a head noun that is optionally modified in a number of ways. The simplest NPs consist of a single noun like **‘technology’**, or a pronoun like **‘it’** in 2 above. Often, the noun is preceded by a determiner like ‘a’, ‘the’, ‘my’, ‘this’ ‘some’, ‘many’, etc. A common type of modifier of the head noun in a NP is the adjective. Adjectives precede the noun and follow the determiner like in **‘better proof’** in 2, and **‘a shocking rate’** in 1. NPs become more complex when the head noun is followed by post modifiers. There are many types of post modifiers (for a complete description of the structure of NP see Willis, 2003), but one of the most frequent is the prepositional phrase like **‘among pupils in schools’** and **‘of reasons for violence’** in example one. Another frequent type of a post modifier is the relative clause.

Consider the following NP:

‘an activity which uses quantifiers with a specific determiner to make statements about specific items’ (Willis, 2003:79).

This whole NP is about a certain type of ‘activity’. The head noun ‘activity’ is preceded by the determiner ‘an’, and is followed by the relative clause ‘which ... items’. The relative clause post modifier specifies, or modifies, the head noun.

We can see that NPs may be very complex. But two additional facts make their complexity even more problematic as far as reading comprehension is concerned: First, we have to keep in mind that these complex linguistic phrases are only a part of the whole sentence and many sentences consist of more than one NP. Second, NPs take up a large proportion of the academic text. If we look at the proportion of NPs in the excerpts above, we can see that they constitute 67% of all the words. Thus, if we want our students to be able to comprehend academic texts, we must make them aware of the concept of NPs, teach them how to identify them in the text and understand their meaning.

The principles behind the teaching plan

The method that I use is inspired by the Multi-Sensory Structured Language (MSL) approach which was originally developed for first language students diagnosed with LD (See e.g. Gillingham & Stillman, 1960, Williams, 1987, Miles, 1992), and was successfully adapted for At-Risk and students diagnosed with LD learning a foreign language (For a review, see Sparks & Miller, 2000). This approach advocates direct teaching of language structure using the visual, auditory and tactile-kinesthetic skills simultaneously.

The guiding principles of this approach are:

1. Give explicit explanations of the structure and meaning of NPs but make them as simple as possible.
2. Make use of knowledge of L1. Knowledge of L1 is a resource that can be very helpful in direct explanation of linguistic structures and should not be ignored.
3. Integrate multi-sensory activities to enforce the internalization of the structure of the NPs.

The first two principles are interrelated; by relying on Hebrew we can make the teaching of NPs easier. Recourse to Hebrew translation is very helpful because in most cases, the structure of English NPs can be compared to Hebrew NPs relatively easily.

The following table presents a comparison between the most frequent English NPs and their Hebrew equivalents.

Structure	English examples	Hebrew equivalents
Pronoun	He, she, it, him	The same. ‘it’ must be distinguished from Hebrew ‘he’ or ‘she’.
Determiner (Det) + N	A book, the book, these, my, some books	The determiners are markers of NPs. They are similar to Hebrew except for demonstratives (this, these) and possessives (my, his) in which the order in Hebrew is reversed: הספרים האלה, הספרים שלי
Det+ adjective + (adjective) + N	An interesting , (eye-opening) book	The opposite order: (ספר מעניין, מאיר עיניים) Practice the idea that the head noun is at the end of the NP and the translation is backward.
Post modifiers: prepositional phrase:	The reasons for his reaction	The same: הסיבות לתגובה שלו
Post modifiers: a relative clause	The book that I have read The book that is on the table	The same: הספר שקראתי. הספר שעל השולחן.
Relative pronoun omitted	The girl I told you about	In Hebrew the relative pronoun is never omitted. This has to be explained at a later stage.
Reduced relative clause (wh word and auxiliary are deleted)	The girl walking over there is my sister.	This may be a real problem. It may be taught and practiced at a later stage.
Possessive ‘s	The child’s mother	Always hard for Hebrew speakers. Reverse the order. אמו של הילד.

The table delineates the comparability between English and Hebrew. However, in order for the students to be able to make these comparisons they must be able to do the following: one, be aware that NPs exist; two, identify the boundaries of the NP and three, identify the specific structure of a particular NP. This can be done by a method of the Multi Sensory System: color coding. Students use different colors for different linguistic components. They consistently use the same color for the same component. This technique helps students internalize the structure of the NP visually, which enables them to identify the different types of NPs and look for familiar structures in the long line of words in a sentence. Additionally, as the students color a whole NP with the same color, they kinesthetically internalize the idea that words group together to form a phrase and that reading is not a process of decoding word for word. And, color coding is fun at any age.

Now that I have discussed the three principles of my method, I will present it step by step.

THE STEPS OF THE TEACHING PLAN

1. Creating an awareness of the concept of NP

The first thing that I do is raise the students' awareness to the fact that a sentence cannot be read word for word like items on a list. I read passages aloud, exaggerating intonation of phrases and the pauses between them. I let the students practice reading with the right intonation before they read out loud in front of the class. I also teach phrases and chunks in their reading texts and do activities that make them use these chunks in different ways. These activities train students to look for ways words are grouped together in a sentence, and to find the boundaries of these groups. (For a variety of activities that are related to chunks see Lewis, 1997.)

Now we start with the NP itself. The students have to learn the concept of NP. I start with prepositional phrases (**to** the man, **in** the garden, **during** the first week). Prepositions are always followed by NPs, which makes it easy to identify the beginning of a NP. Additionally, prepositional phrases often function as post modifiers of NP (see above), thus preparing pupils to understand post modifiers as well.

I write the following sentences on the board:

- A. I gave the book **to** John.
- B. I gave the book **to** him.
- C. I gave the book **to** the boy.
- D. I gave the book **to** the tall handsome boy.

'John' in 'A' is a noun. 'Him' in 'B' is a pronoun that replaces John. I explain that it is a noun too. In C, 'boy' is a noun, but 'the' is not. I explain that 'the' is needed

for the specification of the noun; it is not just any boy, but the boy we mentioned before. The main element in the combination of the two words is still the noun 'boy'. I also show them that the pronoun 'him' replaces the whole phrase, 'the boy'. It is impossible to say "*the him". This is an indication that 'the boy' functions like one unit. In 'D' the students see that although the phrase that follows the preposition 'to' is longer, it is still about the boy and all of it can be replaced by the pronoun 'him' (i.e. 'I gave the book to him' instead of 'I gave the book to the tall handsome boy'). It is not possible to replace half of the expression with him: "*I gave the book to the tall handsome him".)

2. The Determiner + Adjective+ Noun Construction

The students learn that in such constructions the head noun is the last word. If we want to translate it into Hebrew, we need to go from the end to the beginning. Good practice would be finding the differences between NPs like "a race horse" and "a horse race", "a lunch box" and "a box lunch", etc,

3. The beginning of color coding*

The use of colors must be consistent. I tell the students to color the prepositions **green** and the NPs **yellow**. I want them to separate the NP from the preposition, because later they will deal with NPs that are not preceded by a preposition. I practice with the students finding all the prepositions in the texts they are reading. Being able to identify prepositions is a first step towards finding markers of NPs. After coloring preposition **green** and the NPs that follow them **yellow**, we translate the NPs into Hebrew. We keep repeating the fact that the most important word in a simple (Det+Adj.+ noun) structure is the last word, and that the translation has to go backwards (see table above).

4. Post modifiers 1

Post modifiers should be read like Hebrew (see the table).

Consider a NP like the following:

The beautiful little girl **with the feather on the ribbon on her hat**.

We are still dealing with NPs that follow prepositions, so in this case we start with the preposition 'with'. The students color each preposition ('with', 'on', 'on') **green** and the NPs **yellow**. They get a chain of prepositional phrases. I do not explain about embedding phrases within phrases. I simply let them translate the chain into Hebrew. This is an example of making the explanations simple by recourse to L1.

הנוצה על הסרט (ש) על הכובע שלה.

* Eds. note: the color coding is shown here by the use of different fonts

5. NPs that do not follow prepositions

At this point I explain that NPs do not necessarily follow a preposition and are an important part in the sentence. I do not use the terms 'subject' or 'object' because simple translation into Hebrew will make these relationships clear. I present the following examples on the board:

- A. Boys *love* girls.
- B. The handsome boys *love* the beautiful girls.
- C. The handsome boys *in* this group *love* the beautiful girls *in* our class.

We color the prepositions **green**, the NPs **yellow** and the verb ('love') **blue**. We see that the verb marks the boundary of the NP, and that NPs may take up most of the sentence. At this point I explain that if there is a preposition (**green**) that **follows** the first **yellow** part ('the handsome boys') the most important word of the whole long phrase ('the handsome boys in this group') is the word that immediately precedes the preposition. In this way they know that the whole phrase is about 'boys'. The students practice other complex sentences. Consider the following example:

Residents *are* upset *about* the increasing number *of* cellular antennas *on* the rooftops *of* buildings *in* their neighborhood. (*Approaching 4, p. 48*)

The first word has to be **yellow**, a NP, because it is the beginning of a sentence and is followed by a verb. The word 'upset' is an adjective that follows the verb 'to be' and is not part of a NP. The preposition 'about' is a marker of a coming NP. There is a chain of NPs now. The students identify 'number' as the head noun because it immediately precedes the first preposition. Since this noun ('number') is preceded by an adjective they go backward and translate; מספר גדל והולך. From there on they follow the chain of phrases like in Hebrew:

אנטנות סלולריות על הגגות של בניינים בשכונות שלהם.

6. Post modifiers 2

The next step is relative clauses as post modifiers. The most important word, the head noun, of the complex NP precedes the relative pronoun (which, that, etc). Consider the following complex sentence:

One *of* the major attractions *of* American Idol *is* that *in* the beginning stages *of* the competition many untalented contestants *give* embarrassing performances which *are* often *ridiculed* *by* the judges. (*Approaching 4, p. 100*).

The word 'performances' immediately precedes the relative pronoun 'which' and therefore it is the head

noun of the NP that follows the verb 'give'. As you can see, this is a very complex sentence, but there is no need to get into complicated explanations about main and embedded clauses. Direct translation into Hebrew according to the rules that we have learnt will lead to the comprehension of this sentence:

אחת האטרקציות המרכזיות של כוכב נולד האמריקני היא שבשלבם הראשוניים של התחרות הרבה מתחרים לא מוכשרים נותנים הופעות מביכות אשר לעתים קרובות נלעגות על ידי השופטים.

7. NP boundaries

Students must be taught where the **yellow** part begins and where it ends. Of course, we cannot give an answer that will cover all the possible sentences, but we can provide some markers of NP boundaries that will work in many cases. The following linguistic components mark the beginning of NPs: the beginning of a sentence, determiners (a/an, the, some, many, a lot of, other, my, David's, this, those, etc.), and prepositions (in, at, on, with, by, during, etc.). The end of NPs (which I call 'stoppers' as I learned from a colleague) may be: a full stop, a comma, conjunctions (and, or, because, if, although, etc.), relative pronouns or prepositions. It is very important to practice NP boundaries since it helps the students find the head noun and parse the whole sentence correctly.

Summary

The structural descriptions in this article do not cover all English sentence types. If students acquire the ability to automatically identify and comprehend the types of sentences that are described here, their ability to comprehend academic texts will improve tremendously. Until the rest of the structures are taught, these students will be able to close the gaps by compensating strategies such as relying on background knowledge or making inferences.

I developed the teaching plan described here while working with Mechina students at Gordon College. The Mechina students are high school graduates in their twenties. Although most of the students are not diagnosed with LD, they report difficulties in comprehending sentences, even when all the words in the sentences are familiar. They claim that the color coding system is very helpful and I can see that, although a lot more practice is still needed, it has changed the way they approach texts. I started implementing this method last year, and I have continued to develop it. There was tremendous progress in last year students' reading skills following the implementation of this system.

The plan described in this article is in the first stages of its development and I would love to get feedback.

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HARNESSING THE SENSE OF TASTE AND SMELL IN TEACHING THE ALPHABET

Tova Teitelbaum (teitel_j@netvision.net.il)

Multisensory Teaching

One of the hallmarks of pupils with reading difficulties is their inability recognise a printed word even though they have encountered it many times. To overcome this problem most remedial schemes (Orton Gillingham/Hickey) use multisensory techniques to teach new material.

Multisensory teaching means the deliberate use of three or more sensory channels in the learning/teaching process. Auditory and visual channels are used in the traditional classroom. At the foundation level movement (jump three times) and touch (cut out, colour in) are also used. For efficient learning to take place, all senses must work simultaneously. In order for this to happen reading schemes use the following routine:

- The pupil is shown the new letter (visual).
- The teacher says the letter (auditory).
- When the pupil is taught the new letter he is expected to say it out aloud.
- The pupil is then asked to write the letter on a card *while saying the letter out aloud*.

Thus the pupil learns what the letter looks like, what it sounds like, how speech organs work to say it, how to pronounce it and how the arm moves to write it -

simultaneously. A visual clue is drawn at the back of the card to help trigger the memory. These cards are revised at home on a daily basis.

The aim is for the pupil to acquire permanent, automatic response for the sounds and shapes of the letters.

However, memory does not necessarily need a visual clue to activate it. Smell and taste can also trigger memory. These senses have rarely been incorporated in the learning process. Commercial enterprises use the sense of smell to influence our buying habits. As we walk into a supermarket we are assailed by the smell of fresh baked goods. These are usually found near the front. The aroma arouses our appetites and encourages us to buy more food. Department stores always have their perfume counters near the entrance. The heady fragrances relax us and make us more susceptible to the soft sell of goods near these counters. The article "Follow that Scent" (Jerusalem Post 11/1/08) starts with the following sentence: "By subjecting its customers to certain smells, Bank Leumi hopes to increase its business."

For a long time I tried to work out a technique that would help children internalize the alphabet without relying so much on the traditional learning channels such as sight and sound. The learner with weak auditory processing skills finds it almost impossible to pick up information

just by listening. At the end of the first year of English these pupils have picked up almost no English because of the emphasis on the oral/aural aspects of learning used at the beginning stages.

Historical Background

The ultra orthodox Jewish community uses food when the young child is first introduced to reading. Reading is taught at the age of three in a Heder. On the day the boy (only boys go to Heder) first starts learning to read, he is given a slate with the letters covered in honey. As he traces the letter he licks his fingers so that he associates reading with a sweet and happy memory. Basedow (1723 -1790) an English educator, describes learning to read by using his “Gingerbread Method”

To Master John the English maid
A hornbook gives of gingerbread.
And that the child may learn the better
As he can name he eats the letter.

He claimed that “it is not necessary for any child to eat the alphabet for more than three weeks.” Rita Brown “Apples, Bananas and Candy” describes the use of food for remedial teaching. I became intrigued by the idea of using the sense of taste and smell in the classroom.

Background

This method was first used with a group of 93 pupils who were divided into three classes. The parents were mainly professionals and academics, very involved in their children’s schooling. English was taught in twice weekly fifty minute sessions. I decided to introduce one new letter per week, using multisensory techniques that emphasise the sense of smell and taste. As each letter was introduced an appropriate food was brought into the classroom. I always chose a cognate so that the pupils did not have to remember the meaning of the word but could focus on the grapheme/phoneme relationship. At the end of the lesson there was a lively discussion about what food would be appropriate for the next letter.

The children would come up to me in the playground on days they did not have a lesson with me to ask what food I was going to bring. I didn’t realize how serious they were till some of them asked me during one recess “What are we going to eat for letter “D”? We’re not dogs so it can’t be “Dogli.”

Outline of Lesson for Teaching a New Letter (M)

1. The teacher asks the pupils which letter is next.
2. The pupils guess which food they were going to eat. (Melon, mango ,milkshake, marshmallows)
3. The teacher shows the food. (I choose marshmallows because this is the easiest to serve.)

4. The teacher writes the letter on the blackboard.
5. The pupils write the letter in the air, on the back of their hand, on each other’s back.
6. On the back of their worksheet the children write pre-writing exercises based on the new letter. This is to encourage fluency and to remind them that English, unlike Hebrew starts on the left side of the paper. The pupils are told that the pattern does not have to be perfect but it should be fluent – no erasing and no going over.
7. The pupils copy the new letter from the blackboard. As this is done on the back of the worksheet and not the notebook the children don’t feel pressured into erasing a letter that is not up to their expectations.
8. Turn the worksheet over. This page has a ready to be cut out-line of the new letter, a sample of the new letter in upper and lower case. There are pictures of words that the children know that start with the letter (Mickey Mouse, money, and cognates).
9. The children are asked to cut out the pictures and paste them under the appropriate page in their note books and also copy the new letter into the notebook. While the children are doing this, one pupil goes around the classroom and offers the food: “Would you like a ... (marshmallow)?”
“Yes, please” and “No, thank you” are taught from the earliest lessons as appropriate responses.
10. When the pupils have finished these tasks they are asked to put the cut out letters on their desks in alphabetical order.

Additional Activities

With the cut out letters spread out in front of them the teacher asks the children do tasks such as the following:

1. Show the letter which is at the beginning of these words: bank, balloon
2. Show the capital letter “D”
3. Which letter makes the “F” sound
4. Stand up if you name starts with “L”
5. The teacher holds up a letter and asks “Which of your friends’ names starts with this letter?”

There are many variations to these games. The idea behind these activities is to familiarize the child with the grapheme / phoneme correspondence. In these lessons virtually all senses are used to stimulate learning. The sense of smell and taste when the food is introduced, the audio/ visual and kinetic learning are involved in the ABC activities.

Conclusion

Ninety three pupils were involved in the initial project. Ten had been assessed and were known to have Learning Difficulties. At the end of the school year, except for two who could not read in L1, all children could recognize and sequel correctly the letters of the alphabet. This learning technique was repeated a number of times in regular classes. All pupils benefited from technique. The pupils with learning difficulties could join in and felt included in the learning process.

List of Food Cognates

A – avocado
 B – beigel
 C – cornflakes
 D – danona
 E – egg (Most children seem to know the word “egggroll.”)
 F – felafel balls
 G – granola
 H – hamburgers (tofu)
 I – Israeli salad
 J – jelly
 K – ketchup
 L – lemon
 M – marshmallow
 N – nescafe
 O – orangeade (drink)

P – popcorn
 Q – Quaker oats
 R – ravioli (cold and awful)
 S – sandwich
 T – toffee
 U – ugh draw something you don’t like
 V – vanilla
 W – wafers
 X – Chewing gum is not allowed at school.
 I hand out a stick to each child. They paste the wrapper in the notebook, draw a big X over it and promise not to eat the gum till they get home.
 Y – yogurt
 Z – there used to be a dreadful powder called “Zip” when they stopped manufacturing it I couldn’t find a substitute. Any suggestions?

Teachers may use different cognates. I chose mine based on the convenience of bringing them into the classroom and the cost involved.

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LEARNING STYLES: THE KEY TO EFFECTIVE TEACHING

An Interview with Melodie Rosenfeld

Amanda Caplan (*amadacaplan@gmail.com*)



“Teaching is not a job for me. It’s my passion. I love it,” says Dr. Melodie Rosenfeld. This passion began when Melodie trained and worked as a counselor in Habonim, a Zionist youth movement, in California. The informal learning environment, with no grades and where discussion and lessons needed to be intrinsically exciting and meaningful, provided Melodie with what she believes to be her best professional development.

Melodie completed her BA in Near Eastern Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. Her MA, from California State University at San Diego, qualified her as a reading specialist and an expert in special education, with a focus on teaching dyslexic learners and learners with other difficulties. She also has a lifetime teaching credential and a reading specialist credential. Her PhD, from the University of Utrecht, Netherlands, includes four published research articles which focus on teacher professional development. In her research, she found that teachers who understand their colleagues and their own learning needs are more sensitive to their pupils’ learning needs. Consequently, they are more effective in the classroom.

Melodie describes using learning styles in teacher development as a “most exciting field”. In her work as a lecturer in the English department of Achva Academic College of Education she facilitates teachers to learn about individual learning differences, which can mean the difference between success and failure for some learners.

Melodie heads a program at Achva to develop academic skills in first year students. She teaches many courses, covering a myriad of subjects. Her courses include learning styles, academic writing (online), teaching of EFL writing (online), teaching EFL to pupils with special needs, adolescent psychology, and EFL language lab.

With over thirty-five years of experience in the field as a reading specialist working with dyslexic readers and learners with other difficulties of all ages, Melodie has a wealth of knowledge at her fingertips. However, she has five crucial tips for teachers of pupils of all ages, young and old. If you put these five tips into practice, you will be on the way to becoming a better teacher for all your pupils, not just for those having difficulties.

Tip 1: Continue to learn about yourself as a learner. According to research, those of us with strong learning preferences (styles) often teach the way WE like to learn. This unfairly disadvantages pupils who learn differently than we do. When we become more sensitive to our own learning biases and preferences, we can better help our diverse pupils.

Tip 2: Talk to your pupils and **connect** with them. Find out what kind of learning support they need. If you use a win-win approach with your pupils and their parents, your teaching becomes far more effective and rewarding for you.

Tip 3: Nurture the belief that **all** pupils can learn. Effective teachers hold this belief and understand that they play a major role in helping pupils learn.

Tip 4: Empower your pupils to help them understand how they can learn best. Teach pupils about their own different learning styles. Develop a diverse repertoire for presenting material so that pupils can try out different ways of learning which are the most effective for them.

Tip 5: Explicitly teach what you want to teach. Don’t assume that the pupils can read your mind or that they come with the necessary prerequisite skills or understanding. Tell them what you want them to accomplish and understand, and then teach it.

In addition to the time she invests in teaching, Melodie still has time for the other important parts of her life – her husband and their wonderful children and four grandchildren. She reads novels for relaxation. She and her husband enjoy travelling to learn about Jewish historical roots in other countries. They have visited Poland, Saloniki and Spain. In the spring they plan to travel to the Netherlands to visit Righteous Gentiles who hid their Dutch dear friends.

If you have any questions you would like to put to Melodie regarding individual learners’ differences, please contact her at melodie@macam.ac.il.

Amanda Caplan teaches at De Shalit Junior High School in Rehovot.

THE JERUSALEM READING RECOVERY PROGRAM

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BACKGROUND: One fateful day in 1989, I was told that an introductory lecture on Dyslexia was scheduled in my son's high school. The speaker was Lindsay Peer, the newly appointed National Advisor on Dyslexia. Since I was interested in the subject as an English teacher, I was granted permission to be relieved of my teaching duties for that day in order to expand my horizons.

As she spoke, I had the strange sensation that she was describing my son! In eleventh grade and seventeen years old at the time, he had suffered throughout his school career and underachieved, even though I knew he was highly intelligent. His writing was slow, sloppy and inaccurate. As a result, one day, his teacher had ripped up his work in front of the entire class and said, "If this is how you write, this is what you are." He had suffered many insults and embarrassments, but his parents and teachers had no idea that his difficulties had a name, and more importantly that he could succeed in his studies and repair his sense of self-worth.

My son was "fortunate". He was tested immediately and indeed he had SpLD (Specific Learning Difficulties), dysgraphia, dyspraxia, and a very high intelligence. As a result, after a battle with the authorities, he received appropriate accommodations and began to fulfill his potential as a pupil.

At that point I promised myself that, as an educator, I would devote the remainder of my career to enabling other children to function within the system with dignity and respect for their needs. Particularly, I wished to assist pupils from low socio-economic groups who would not otherwise receive assistance.

Thus, it was an opportune moment when Mrs. Tzivvia Ariel, the chief inspector for English in Jerusalem, noticed that there were many pupils in the regular classes who were at risk for failure, since they were blocked by their inability to read and write. The teachers in those classes were unable to meet the pupils' needs within the framework of the large, mainstream classes. Urgently trying to rectify the situation, Mrs. Tzivvia Ariel managed to convince Amira Flesental in the Jerusalem municipality in conjunction with the Ministry of Education to allocate funds to help these pupils with difficulties. Since in seventh grade pupils enter Junior High School, it was considered an appropriate time for a 'second chance' and a 'new beginning.' Thus, the READING RECOVERY PROGRAM (RR) evolved in secondary education with the aim of identifying difficulties as early as possible and helping pupils to overcome them.

In 1995, the Jerusalem English inspectorate asked me to set up and supervise 'non-readers' programs in regular schools. In 1996, it was decided to change the name of the program to 'reading recovery' and to refer to the pupils as 'emergent readers' to accentuate the positive, rather than the negative. What began as an experimental program in three schools has now expanded to include some thirteen schools and has become an integral part of the services in English language instruction in Jerusalem. A successful program in elementary school and programs in other areas of the city and country have followed suit.

In 1996, after experimenting with pulling out pupils for 2 hours a week, it was decided to place the emergent readers in reading recovery groups for the entire four hours of English instruction in order to create a safe, supportive environment for all of the hours that they were exposed to English.

It was also decided to focus on the precise nature of the difficulties learners face in the foreign language and develop a continuum of strategies for addressing their problem area(s) rather than on labeling. (Ganschow, Sparks & Schneider, 1998).

POPULATION: The reading recovery (RR) pupils are "at risk" not only for failing English, but also for dropping out of school, and even for juvenile delinquency (Barzilay 1998), (Einat, 2006). Since many of these pupils come from disadvantaged backgrounds, a very small percentage of them have actually been diagnosed as having learning disabilities. Yet, after studying EFL for several years, they have not acquired sufficient literacy skills in English to function in a regular, heterogeneous classroom. Without intervention, the gaps widen and the problem becomes increasingly severe for these emergent readers. Furthermore,

"a high level of proficiency in English is a prerequisite for higher education and employment; yet many intelligent pupils fail to acquire the necessary skills in English, and as a result, are barred from pursuing higher education and prevented from realizing their own potential. (Secemski, Deutch & Adoram, 2000)"

There are three main sub-groups among pupils:

1. those who literally cannot distinguish an 'a' from a 'b'
2. pupils with gaps in basic decoding skills
3. those who have basic decoding skills, but whose limited vocabulary and reading comprehension skills do not enable them to benefit from regular lessons.

SCREENING PROCESS: The group testing and individual screening tools described below enable schools to locate the population in need of Reading Recovery services, who are all the pupils “at-risk” for failing to acquire literacy skills in English.

The first week of school, a standardized written test is administered to pupils in the 7th grade (sometimes excluding English Speakers and A level.) The test, which is designed to determine the degree and nature of the pupil’s difficulties, assesses ability in decoding, moving from sounds to words, basic vocabulary, understanding of phrases, and a simple reading comprehension exercise. Pupils who fare poorly on the written test are subsequently tested orally via a miscue analysis. This procedure confirms which pupils most sorely need the services the program can provide.

After being chosen to participate in the program, some of the pupils feel relieved to join a small group in which more attention is paid to individual needs. Others, feeling stigmatized, leave the regular class very reluctantly. Most of them gradually change their minds as they begin to benefit from the efficacy of the special methods used in the program and particularly, the supportive atmosphere in the RR classroom.

The same test is administered near the end of the year in order to give an indication regarding the effectiveness of the program both for the teachers themselves and for allocation of funds. As a result, when negotiations resumed each year regarding the continuation of the program, I was able to present concrete data showing the progress the pupils had made in reading skills.

TEACHING METHODS AND MATERIALS:

Teachers use textbooks in conjunction with individually prepared materials which are based on a structured, multi-sensory, phonics-based approach and are tailored to their pupils’ needs. For some, the material must be broken down into small, manageable chunks. Thus, some pupils can add only one new letter per lesson, whereas others can advance more rapidly. Reading is taught in conjunction with writing, spelling, listening and spoken language in order to reinforce what has been learned in different modalities. (Secemski, Deutch & Adoram, 2000)

Spongy alphabet letters, reading cards and rule cards are utilized for multi-sensory instruction. Reading rules are taught explicitly in a structured, sequential manner and reinforced by accompanying texts. Many pupils find it reassuring to discover that they can learn generalizations (such as the ki, ke rule and ci, ce rule) which lower the memory load in the decoding and encoding process.

Structured, multi-sensory instruction in each lesson

The forty-five minute class is generally divided into smaller units, in which the teacher switches from one modality to another in order to ensure elevated levels of attention.

Sequencing activities include: alphabetizing of spongy letters, letter tracking, and subsequently, alphabetizing simple words.

Pupils are asked to recite reading cards at the beginning of the lesson, in a chorus, individually or in pairs. Pupils must connect the letter shape on the card, to the corresponding sound, using a clue word. When a pupil cannot recall what is on the card, they replace it into the deck of unread cards for further reinforcement. Thus, individual pupils learn to implement effective study skills within the context of the larger group. Through constant review of the cards, the letter sound connection becomes automatic. Vocabulary words, with sample usages in context (chunking) also appear on the cards for daily review. Thus, the pupil can also acquire basic vocabulary

“Dictation generally follows – reviewing spelling rules previously taught. Initially pupils ‘spell’ the words using clue cards and only later actually begin writing in a notebook. Thus, pupils connect the sounds heard, to the shape on the card, and eventually to the kinesthetic movements required to produce whole words on the page. The main part of the class period is devoted to introducing new letters, new sight words, new reading rules, and vocabulary” (Secemski, Deutch & Adoram, 2000).

Reading a story introduces reading comprehension skills and reinforces the sounds learned. Pupils are expected to know only what has been taught explicitly, but since the material has been structured so carefully, they are expected to decode the passage on their own. This procedure makes pupils feel that they ‘can do it’, thus bolstering self-esteem and motivating them to exert further effort to improve. “Some untrained teachers have been found to misuse the book by reading the passages to pupils. As a result, pupils learn listening comprehension skills or how to memorize a text, but not how to read ” (Secemski, Deutch & Adoram, 2000).

Reading comprehension is checked after each reading passage. Teachers use yes/no questions, matching pictures and words, and sentence completion. Sometimes pupils are asked to sequence the events of the story or match the pictures to the captions. Wh questions are introduced and used one at a time. Games are used extensively in the last portion of the lesson to reinforce new material learned in a pleasurable atmosphere making learning English fun.

In addition, games are used as a vehicle to introduce or review basic vocabulary which these pupils generally fail to acquire in their early exposure to English. Thus, numbers, colors, basic classroom equipment, and names of animals must be introduced, initially orally, e.g. connecting the sound of the word to the picture in a Bingo game. At a later stage, the written word replaces the picture in the game. Although vocabulary recall is of utmost importance for the reading and listening comprehension skills required for re-integration into the mainstream classroom, it remains a weak area for many of the RR pupils. (Secemski, Deutch & Adoram, 2000)

Learning Strategies and metacognition are incorporated into the lesson. For instance, pupils are taught scanning techniques in order to locate information in a text. Furthermore, mnemonic devices are utilized in order to make new vocabulary more meaningful, thus improving retention. Periodically, pupils are asked to evaluate their own performance in order to increase self-awareness. (Secemski, Deutch & Adoram, 2000)

IN-SERVICE TRAINING: The teachers meet throughout the year in order to improve teaching methods, share materials, and discuss problems. In-service training of teachers enables them to keep abreast of the latest methods and materials in the field and assures a high standard of teaching. Furthermore, in response to many requests, in some years the course was opened not only to teachers in RR program, but also to any teacher in the system.

Actually, all English teachers need training in explicit, structured teaching of phonological awareness, particularly the troublesome vowel sounds. In-service training becomes essential for both experienced classroom teachers who may lack fundamental knowledge in this area as well as specialist teachers. As a result, mainstream English teachers were able to acquire tools for teaching reading and writing to ALL of their pupils. This probably has had an impact on the system as a whole.

The workshops which are exclusively for RR teachers explore the social-emotional and behavioral issues that inevitably arise. The following is an excerpt from an unsolicited letter written by a very experienced teacher after the workshop of January, 2009. In addition to commenting on the usefulness of ongoing workshops that deal with real issues as they surface, it shows the value in having a support group in which all teachers can continue to grow and develop.

I found last week's meeting to be so interesting and helpful! I know the reading method [Hickey], but dealing with some of the difficult behaviors in the class is still very difficult for me.

She added that she returned to school with renewed vigor to implement some of the suggestions made by fellow RR teachers like Lois, who demonstrated how she refused to get distracted from actual teaching.

I refuse to enter in a conversation or help my screamer when she is screaming at me from across the room or running away. The minute she sits down and raises her hand, I call on her and thank her for following the class rule of how to ask for help. Not easy, but at least the pupils that want to participate are working and making progress.

Furthermore, she adopted another teacher's method for giving very immediate and concrete feedback in each lesson.

I am also using Rachel's 5 point system. Now I am giving points for effort and behavior each lesson. I want them to reflect on how I see them in class [and how they see themselves]. So far they agree with the points they receive. I am also working on giving THEM the responsibility for their learning and behavior. I ... will not accept excuses ... In class they need to change their behavior. Thanks again for helping me deal with my issues. Sincerely, Kate

She had found effective ways to help pupils be aware of unacceptable behavior and become partners in modifying it. She was teaching pupils not to blame others and look for excuses. Most significantly, while giving clear, positive feedback for effort and improvement, she was entering into a fruitful dialogue, which is critical for building a relationship with pupils and dealing with them in a holistic manner.

SELF-ESTEEM: The benefits of enhancing self-esteem of the pupils participating in the program are considerable. In a typical interview, N. said, "In the regular class I felt like a retard, (*mefageret*) when I didn't even know the ABC. I was embarrassed to ask any questions." She went on to explain the difference in the RR class. She was thrilled to see that everyone was learning the ABC and the basics of learning. "I could ask questions and succeed in reading our texts. I really felt good about myself and had hope." After one year in RR, this pupil gained sufficient literacy skills in English to return to the heterogeneous class. This pupil learned to view herself as a potential reader and learner in English. "Children learn to believe in themselves when they have someone who believes in them (Applebaum, 2009)." That someone is often the RR teacher.

WIDER CONTEXT: Through working as the *madricha* in the RR program, I became increasingly aware of the extent to which RR functions in a system. I could supervise a potentially effective program which

became ineffective in an unsupportive context. The success depends a great deal on the cooperation of the principal, grade level head (*rakezet shichva*) and English department head. It depends on the collaboration among all of the above and the RR teacher. The context of the school often contributes critically to the program's success or failure.

CHANGE OF ATTITUDE TOWARD LEARNING DIFFERENCES: The existence of the program in a school tends to modify the attitude of staff and administration to create 'emergent-reader friendly schools', and make participants' return to the mainstream class, as accepted, functioning members of the group, a more realistic possibility. Occasionally, I have agreed to give workshops for all the teachers in the school who are seeking ways to support struggling pupils. This contributes to creating an inclusive environment which is more conducive to learning for all pupils who are experiencing difficulties.

CONCLUSION: My aim here is to contribute to the ongoing dialogue among teachers of emergent readers throughout Israel and to constantly introduce improvements in this area of EFL teaching. As the program expands, it is becoming an integral part of the Israeli educational system. There are other successful programs already being implemented in the lower grades. In addition, other programs are being administered directly by the schools. Fortunately the programs still exist due to the staunch support of the Jerusalem Inspector, Pat Talshir, and Amira Flesental, at the Municipality. Thus, many pupils will have a second chance to succeed in acquiring literacy while learning the foreign language.

However, there are still numerous problems in the operation of programs for at-risk pupils. We hope that more teachers can be trained in more effective ways, refining teaching methods and increasing collaboration among teachers in the field, thus reaching more pupils in both special programs and in the mainstream classrooms.

Schools should consider implementing reading recovery programs with the aim of re-integrating pupils into the heterogeneous classroom as soon as they have acquired basic literacy skills in English and so that they can then benefit from instruction in the regular classroom. In fact, the surest sign of efficacy in teaching the basics of English would be that all pupils would acquire literacy in English in the regular, inclusive system. However, as long as there are pupils who are at-risk for failing, RR remains a life-saver for disadvantaged pupils who have no other access to assistance and previously were

condemned to a history of failure in a subject which is a passport to higher education in Israel.

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Susie Secemski collaborated with Rika Deutch and Carmel Adoram, in doing quantitative research on the data gathered over four years. The results were presented at a poster session at the first international conference on multilingualism and dyslexia in Manchester. Subsequently, a shortened version was published in a British book, Multilingualism, Literacy, and Dyslexia: A Challenge to Educators. She has also done extensive qualitative research on the efficacy of RR in a PhD. program.

Susie teaches in the English Department of the Jerusalem Michlala, where she is also a teacher-trainer. She has taught similar courses at David Yellin College and Lifshitz College. In addition, she has taught a course on Assessment of Specific Learning Difficulties in English at Talpiot College in Tel Aviv. At the University Secondary School she initiated the learning center, where she works in an advisory capacity. As madricha for the RR program, she also offers workshops and courses at the Pedagogical Center.

In June, 2009, Susie and Marlene Grayevski received the Manchi Prize for Excellence in Education for their hadracha in the Reading Recovery Programs.



**AN ENGLISH SUMMER READING PROGRAM FOR PUPILS
HAVING DIFFICULTY ACQUIRING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LITERACY:
Progress in Self-Efficacy and Reading Skills**

Sharon Azaria (*sharonandisrael@gmail.com*)

Introduction

In an attempt to overcome the ever widening gaps in the educational system in Israel and the disparities in the proportion of success between lower and higher socio-economic groups, a unique English summer reading program was formulated. This English reading program, summer camp, aimed to promote reading and comprehension at the initial stages among children who had previously failed to read successfully. The following questions were posed: Will the English reading program change the children's self efficacy in relation to being English learners? Will there be an improvement in their language skills, and more specifically, in their reading skills.

Here we focus on the elements that determine success or failure in learning to read at the initial decoding stage in a foreign language class. We will examine the components of the summer program that aided the children in breaking the cycle of failure.

Cognitive and affective factors in foreign language learning

Teaching reading in a foreign language is a complex task, but when there is no connection between the two sets of letters, as in Hebrew and English, the task is even more intricate (Wallace, 1992; Hayne, 1989). Hebrew is a mother tongue with a perfect correspondence between graphemes and phonemes when written with vowels, whereas the foreign language, English, has many rules and exceptions. Thus, for Hebrew speakers, reading in English is especially complicated. Furthermore, since the general proficiency level of the first language (Hakuta, 1990; Cummins, 1994) and the interrelated learning of language functions such as phonology, orthographic, semantics and syntax (Ganschow and Sparks, 1995) determine the success in the foreign language, first language proficiency is also a factor. Therefore, to succeed in successfully transferring basic understanding of reading knowledge from the mother tongue to the target language, the children need to have successfully mastered phonological abilities in their mother tongue, hear the differences between the phonemes in the mother tongue and the target language, mastered reading in the mother tongue and be at the fluent stage of automaticity, in addition to having a basic oral knowledge of the target language.

Over the past decade research has shown that phonics instruction, which enables a child to decode new words within texts, is the main contributor to a child's success in reading. Phonics instruction when teaching reading is most effective when it is taught systematically, directly and explicitly (Chall, 1967; Adams, 1990; National Reading Panel, 2000; Armbruster and Osborne, 2002, Vellutino, Scanlon, Sipay & Small, 1996). Phonics improves word recognition, spelling, and reading comprehension (Armbruster and Osborne, 2002). It is beneficial for children from various social and economic levels and is particularly beneficial for at risk readers and children having difficulties reading.

In a class of elementary school children where there is no immediate need for the foreign language, additional factors to be considered in promoting foreign language learning. These factors include: teacher and children's **attribution** and developing a **caring classroom** which activates the desire to learn while providing opportunities for success. These above affective factors are vital in the formation of positive attitudes and motivation in foreign language learning.

Teachers' and children's **attribution** explains their perceptions of reasonability in behavior and events which influence their behavior and feelings (Weiner, 1972, 1974). It is the basic motivation that they have which encourages them to change the environment in appropriate and useful ways. Inner feelings cause changes in our behavior and beliefs which may create changes in the environment. This in turn will effect and change behavior. This may affect children's expectations from themselves, from their teachers and from their parents. Teachers and parents may have lower expectations from a child who is unsuccessful in learning. Accordingly, the child may lower his or her own expectations. Alternatively, when a child is successful, adults may raise their expectations so the child's own expectations also rise.

Caring is the mark of being human. We care what happens to us and others (Heidegger, 1962). Caring is the bedrock of all successful education and contemporary schooling (Noddings, 1992). "The main aim of education should be to produce competent, caring, loving and lovable people" (Noddings, 1992, p. 174). The children should ultimately feel a sense of belonging and that the program is theirs. Other features of the program are to teach things

that children need to know well, give all children what they need, help children treat each other ethically, help them take responsibility and let them know “that there is nothing mushy about caring” (Noddings, 1992, p.175).

Caring allows people to connect, essential to all learning (Sullo, 2007). Additional essential needs fostering a desire to learn are the ability to make choices, to have fun, and to be safe. According to Sullo (2007) when these needs are met, the **desire to learn** is activated through internal motivation which results in good behavior. In turn, it provides the children with opportunities to succeed and raises their achievement.

Research Questions

This study examines three elements in the context of foreign language learning in an immersion English reading program. First it focuses on the extent to which under achievers in English value the English language. Second, it focuses on the relationship between children’s self efficacy in English as a foreign language and their success in the language. Third, it examines the improvement of the children’s reading acquisition after a three week phonics geared reading program.

Objectives

The objectives of this reading program were:

1. to raise the children’s motivation as learners of English;
2. to strengthen the children’s knowledge of English, with an emphasis on reading acquisition and decoding skills;
3. to change the self-image of the children as learners of English; and
4. to prepare the children for the following school year.

Program

This study was based upon a three week English immersion reading program in a small city in the middle of Israel where the majority of the population is from the lower to middle socio-economic group. The project was divided into two time frames. At the beginning of the summer vacation the children were immersed into English five hours a day for two weeks. During the last week of the vacation the children returned for an additional week. The English reading program was called English Summer Camp. The children knew that they were attending to improve their English.

The main emphasis of the English Summer Camp was placed on teaching reading. A systematic and explicit phonics program called *You Can Do It!* (Azaria, 2008) was used. The program consisted of short stories with

sentences under each picture. There was a story for each short vowel sound, long vowel sound and diagraphs. The exercises allowed for ‘over teaching’. The children worked tactically manipulating known letters for the new words. The children competed with themselves by timing themselves when they were practicing to read the new words through precision teaching. There were review stories for the short and long vowel sounds. Each stage was assessed. The program encouraged teaching vocabulary needed for reading and oral comprehension through songs and mnemonics.

Emphasis was also placed on creating a caring classroom environment for all children and teachers. The groups were small and competed against each other at the beginning and at the end of each day. This helped the children feel a sense of belonging to their group and encouraged team work.

Participants

The study included thirty five children going into the 5th and 6th grades. Most of the children had learning disabilities and others had special educational needs. All the children were between one and a half to two years behind their class. Children were chosen from the three elementary schools where the children were from the lower socio-economic group.

Children were chosen after the expectations from the camp were determined with the English supervisor, letters were sent to the principals and a diagnostic evaluation of each child was performed by their English teacher. Based upon the diagnostic evaluation, the teachers chose the students for the camp and a letter was sent to inform the parents.

Background

All teachers were chosen based upon the work in the field and completion of a reading acquisition course and a course on the caring classroom. All the materials were written especially for the camp. Phonics was taught explicitly and systematically while using enjoyable short stories. Teachers attended a one week preparatory course. At the end of each camp day, there was a one hour feedback session with the teachers and the program co-coordinator.

Research

Rationale:

The Summer Camp was accompanied by a research program designed to evaluate its effect on the participants from four varying aspects:

1. Change in scores in linguistic abilities based on pre and post diagnostic evaluation tests.

2. Change in language ability based on pre and post self report measures.
3. Change in affect, based on self report measures regarding attitudes and motivation towards the study of English.
4. Change in self-image regarding pupils' feelings of self efficacy and ability to learn English.

Summary of Findings:

Summarizing the findings of this study, we see that at the beginning of the Summer Camp the students had positive attitudes towards the studying of English and high expectations from the contribution of the Summer Camp to their knowledge of English. However they had a low self image and low feelings of self efficacy regarding their language abilities.

Their scores on the diagnostic tests of English were relatively low at the beginning of the summer. After two weeks, there was an increase in their diagnostic scores and another increase after the third week.

At the end of the Summer Camp, the students' self image and feelings of self efficacy regarding their language abilities were considerably higher than at the start. In addition, consistent increases in the English language diagnostic evaluation test scores were measured over three test periods.

After their first month back in school, the teachers reported that all children had improved in English; all children were now coping in the class to various degrees; all children understood spoken English better and felt comfortable in class. In addition, the children were more motivated to learn and had more confidence. A change was effected among some of the parents as well. Some parents took private tutors for their children, now believing that the children could succeed, and the children cooperated, striving to improve their English reading and comprehension.

Conclusion

This reading program designed a caring classroom for the children by creating a sense of belonging, encouraging friendship, allowing risk taking and placing responsibilities on the children. In turn there was an atmosphere which enabled learning. Teachers modeled behavior patterns and conducted dialogues with the children, where positive behavior was practiced and confirmed (Noddings, 1992). In addition, as the teachers believed in the children and encouraged them to believe in themselves, attribution and motivation set in.

When the children misbehaved, personal discussions with the child were conducted. Discussions included

examining how the children felt, how they thought their friends felt and how their behavior influenced the reactions their friends had towards them. Although initially there was a lot of fighting among the children, the children realized that negative and positive behavior received different reactions to those they were accustomed to in school. Instead of punishment for misbehavior, discussions were the norm to enable the child to understand their behavior and try to change the unacceptable behavior.

Friendship, also emphasized in this program, was not only discussed but twice a day the children held hands and sang a friendship song. Respect was an important word that all the children learned and were expected to apply in all their activities.

I believe that the above elements in the program were the starting point in the children's perception of themselves as effective learners. The elements were essential in encouraging the children to learn in an environment that encouraged and promoted success.

The instructional elements written for the summer program promoted success for all learners. The program started at the earliest of stages of reading, but developed rapidly, it did not allow children to be embarrassed or unsuccessful. The instructional program quickly introduced the short vowels with reading stories from the first day. Instruction was systematic and explicit, and the stories became more difficult till the children could read basic books in English. Success bred success. As the children completed each book, they were anxious to continue to the next stage. The more the children read, they became more avid readers. Children were given opportunities to show their accomplishments at the assembly held at the end of each day, by presenting in front of all camp participants. Additional opportunities for showcasing accomplishments were provided through presentations in front of visitors. Each day, children who were successful received certificates awarded in front of the whole camp with words of congratulation and a proper hand shake. For many children this was the first time they had received certificates for their accomplishments, and all the children strived to receive one.

In conclusion, the implementation of this explicit and systematic phonics reading program with sufficient repetitions provided children with an opportunity to improve their reading skills. When the instructional program, *You Can Do It!* was compounded with a supportive environment, children who were accustomed to failure not only attained success, but grew to believe in themselves and in their own abilities as foreign language learners.

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**THE ADAM RESEARCH CENTER FOR LANGUAGE ABILITIES  
AND MULTILINGUALISM**  
**Laboratory for research and teacher education**

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At the beginning of March we opened [The Adam Research Center for Language Abilities and Multilingualism](#) at the Levinsky College of Education, Tel Aviv Israel.

The guiding principle of the Adam Center is **One Brain, Two Languages**.

The goals of the center are two-fold. On the one hand, the center is equipped for state-of-the-art research into the theoretical underpinnings of dyslexia. On the other hand, the center will provide opportunities for the continuing professional development of in-service teachers. We believe that the role of teachers in the future is to create a school evolution (Berninger, Dunn, Lin and Shimada, 2004) by implementing scientific research in the classroom. The 'scientist-practitioner approach' (Berninger et al. 2004) believes that teacher education must be scientifically informed. We hope to develop and

train such teachers to meet the ever-growing needs of the population of people who find difficulty in succeeding within the academic setting.

The center is multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary: the graduate courses offered through the center include applied linguistics, cognitive psychology, educational evaluation, brain research and its application to education and learning disabilities, learning disabilities and language acquisition.

As it is compulsory for students in Israeli schools to pass an English examination in order to obtain a matriculation certificate, the issue of learning English as a Foreign Language remains an important focus in the educational setting. The center will address populations of teachers in at least two languages – either Hebrew or English – or in some cases Arabic and English. In many

cases, Hebrew is the second language and English is the third or the fourth. Thus we have to meet the demands of those people whose mother tongue is, for example, Arabic or Russian and who have to succeed in learning both Hebrew and English as a second/foreign language.

As learning English grows ever more important in Israel, for those pupils with learning disabilities, it is a difficult and at times impossible path. In light of the importance of native language literacy and of English as a Foreign Language, and since literacy (reading and writing) is still the main goal of the Israeli educational system, we have to start providing solutions for this demand. There is a need to train teachers who have vast knowledge in various fields which enables them to locate difficulties, build suitable intervention programs and upgrade the professionalism of teachers in the college, in the region and in the entire country. This will be realized by giving continuing education programs to the staff members, by supporting and diagnosing the students in the college, by assisting in the diagnosis of students in need and building bilingual programs for them and by consulting families who cope with learning problems.

The term, "language abilities," expresses our positive approach. The goal is the creation of a culture drawing upon the positive side of the learners' abilities and the building of a positive self image. The integration of academic requirements with emotional and meta-cognitive aspects is the key to the empowerment of teaching and learning in these populations.

Over the last four years, we have been training in-service teachers in educational evaluation in two languages. The participants in the two year certification course acquire the finely tuned skills required for identifying learning disabilities on the one hand, and on the other, the skills for understanding how the specific learning disability affects FL learning. Course participants, who are all trained EFL teachers, learn how to develop appropriate and specialized intervention programs thus guiding the learners, their parents and teachers toward academic

success. These graduates will become the new cadre of teachers and pedagogical advisors in the center and in the educational system.

Learning disabilities' assessments are common today in the Western World; however, the majority of these assessments are monolingual. In this center we are training bilingual assessors as well as developing materials in two languages.

It is interesting to note, that in many learners, dyslexia is identified by the foreign language teacher in the last years of elementary school when they start learning English or even only at the secondary school level. Moreover, the severity of the learning disability can be pinpointed with greater accuracy in the foreign language rather than the mother tongue. Time and time again we see this, emphasizing the necessity for the bilingual assessment.

The laboratory has state-of-the-art technology for recording the assessments and intervention methods which can be used as future learning tools. The raw data will be catalogued to be used for future research. In addition, computer programs have been developed so that sophisticated research can be carried out studying many aspects of understanding learning disabilities as well as developing teacher education.

Since the center is multi disciplinary, experts from a number of fields will work together and collaborate. It is a teaching, learning center for all involved.

*Adam Flint, for whom the center is named, was a multi-talented youth who most of his life painted, sculpted and wrote while dealing daily with ADHD. In 2001, as a young soldier aged 18, Adam committed suicide.*

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## A PROJECT FOR BOOSTING ENGLISH LEARNERS AT RISK FOR READING FAILURE

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Every English teacher knows that, even with her best efforts, a certain percentage of learners will not manage to pick up basic English skills, even after a year of regular classroom instruction. The learners may have been diagnosed with dyslexia, or are simply disadvantaged. These learners have a hazy notion, at best, of the English alphabet, read very poorly or not at all, spell with reckless abandon, mix up letters and their sounds – and those vowels? – forget it!

The time-tested solution for working with this sort of learner is to use the phonetic approach, as discussed at a recent session by Dr. Peggy Barzilay at the Mofet study day, “Challenged Learners and ELT Training.” (Editors’ note: Articles by Peggy Barzilay appear in this Forum issue.)

One phonetic system that is well known in Israel is the Hickey Method, a phonetic, multi-sensory system for tutoring English developed in England by Dr. Kathleen Hickey who was director of the British Dyslexia Institute in the 1970s. The system was adapted for EFL learners and has a long history of success, including almost 20 years in Israel. Hickey is similar to other phonics-based systems using effective components such as cards linking letters to their sounds using clue words, rule cards, illustrated stories, games, and a predictable lesson structure. Each lesson is composed of short, multi-sensory activities, to help learners with limited attention spans to concentrate and focus. In each lesson the pupil practices each new item (letter, letter combination, rule) using all the language skills – reading (decoding and comprehension), writing (encoding), speaking, and listening comprehension. Kids enjoy the lessons, which have fun elements, and look forward to them. And one advantage of Hickey is that the materials are free!

(See [http://dye.macam.ac.il/dyellin\\_open.htm](http://dye.macam.ac.il/dyellin_open.htm), Hickey Website, for free training and tutoring materials. Note: before attempting to use the materials, you should have some Hickey training!)

Since so many learners need a phonetic approach, and there are not enough tutors to go around, many of the education colleges and universities in the country offer courses in Hickey. (Needless to say, Hickey is only the first step for English learners, and teachers need much more training to address the needs of weak learners working toward Bagrut and higher education.) The course enables teachers and tutors to work one-on-one, or to incorporate elements into their classroom teaching

when appropriate and feasible.

As any English teacher also knows, not every learner in Israel who needs private English lessons can afford them. Therefore, since 2006, eight Hickey tutor-training courses have been held in the context of a project to train tutors in this phonetic method and simultaneously provide lessons to struggling English learners who would not otherwise be able to afford private tutelage. Many of the courses were held at the David Yellin College of Education in Jerusalem, and the teachers in the classes did their “volunteer” (practice) tutoring at three elementary schools: Raisheet in Kiryat Menachem, Yefe Nof, and Beit Hakerem. One intensive summer course at the Merkaz Hapedagogi in Jerusalem sought to provide tools to classroom English teachers, some of whom are tutoring struggling learners from their classes during the Ofek Chadash individual “partani” hours.

The Children at Risk department of JDC Israel (also known as the “Joint”) has piloted a project to hold additional Hickey training courses for “half-volunteers” - “Shnat-sherutnikim” from Amutat Alon doing their pre-army year of service in deprived neighborhoods in Lod, Bat Yam, Jerusalem, etc., and “Morot chayalot” teacher-soldiers working full-time in Hatzor Haglilit. These dedicated and talented young people each work individually with 4-20 struggling English learners.

The 148 tutors trained in the context of the project include experienced English teachers already working in schools and tutors who are seeking this in-demand skill for their work with private students. It is common for experienced teachers to seek out this training because the methods they already know have proven ineffective in working with certain learners. They want tools!

Hickey helps learners to master English literacy skills by building up their knowledge step by step, teaching them everything they need to know before asking them to perform a task. Each lesson includes a story, word list for writing practice, and game composed only of the letters and combinations the student has learned to that point. It guarantees success, thereby building confidence and self-esteem even in learners who have previously failed.

The main objection to individual tutoring by a phonetic method is that it is “too slow.” It is true that, in order to answer the needs of struggling learners, new material is introduced at the pace that the learner can handle. Learners are taught to practice and review between

lessons to help them truly internalize the material. In fact, lessons proceed with new material as quickly as the learner can internalize it, but not so fast that everything previously learned is shaky. We can all appreciate the absurdity of the saying “I don’t have time to do it right, but I have time to do it again.”

Because each learner has different abilities and needs, the pace can be adjusted for each student. For many learners this slow, thorough approach is essential if they are to learn English. They may have weak language skills even in their first or second language, so it is not reasonable to expect that they can zoom through acquiring English literacy skills. Phonetic tutoring provides a solid foundation of literacy skills, from which the learner can

continue to master material of increasing complexity with confidence and enjoyment. Hickey learners, after they master the basics of reading and writing, often take off to become avid English readers – they have acquired the key to the world of English literacy!

For more information please contact:

Fern Levitt, 050-731-4843, email [flevitt@mindspring.com](mailto:flevitt@mindspring.com)

Miri Gur, Project Director, JDC Israel, 02-655-7287, email [mirig@jdc.org.il](mailto:mirig@jdc.org.il)

Aliza Yahav, English Dept. Chair, David Yellin College of Education, 02-658-7501, email [aliz@macam.ac.il](mailto:aliz@macam.ac.il)



## Call for articles!

The deadline for submissions to the Summer 2009 edition of the ETAI Forum is **May 10th, 2009** and we are anxiously awaiting your contributions. The deadline for the Winter 2009 edition is **October 20th, 2009**. Make your voice heard!

Submit all contributions as WORD (.doc) documents as an attachment to an e-mail. The name of the document should be your family name and the title of the article, or part of it: i.e. Jones\_callforarticles. **Maximum** article length should be about 2,500 words but if your article is longer, please try not to exceed 4,000 words.

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/owl/resource/560/01/>.

If you have a photo 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 e-mail address.

You must be a member of ETAI to publish in the ETAI Forum. To become a member or renew your membership call Marna Snyder, ETAI Office Director, Tel: 02-500-1844, [etaioffice@gmail.com](mailto:etaioffice@gmail.com). Or visit the ETAI website to download a membership form, <http://www.etni.org.il/etai/>.

Please submit your contributions to: [etaiforum@gmail.com](mailto:etaiforum@gmail.com).

**DYSLEXIA FRIENDLY HAND-OUTS – A QUIZ**

Liz Shapiro (*spell-well@live.com*)

|                                                                                                       | True                     | False                    | Maybe                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Hand-outs should be printed in clear black type on white paper                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Times New Roman is the clearest font for dyslexic readers                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. It is not a good idea to write out hand-outs in BLOCK CAPITALS                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. It is important to make the hand-outs attractive with pictures                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Using extra spacing between words and double spacing between lines can be useful for some students | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Using the passive tense in instructions is not a problem for dyslexic students                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Lay-out with bullet points is not important                                                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. On the computer – keep the background white                                                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. The font should be neat – use 10 points                                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Dyslexic students could find mind mapping useful                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Answers:**

1. False    2. False    3. True    4. Maybe    5. True  
 6. False    7. False    8. False    9. False    10. True

1. 60% of people prefer pastel colored paper to the glare of white paper. Colored plastic overlays are also available (web address: [www.crossboweducation.com](http://www.crossboweducation.com)) Highlighting key words can be useful.
2. The fonts: **Tahoma**, **Comic Sans** and **Arial** are clearer to read for dyslexic students.
3. Readers use the shape of the word to identify it. CAPITAL LETTERS are all the same height, removing the help offered by the shape.
4. Pictures are helpful if they illustrate the meaning! – not just for decoration, e.g. ‘Tree’  is confusing. ‘Tree’  is relevant.
5. Some students will find double spacing between lines can help tracking.
6. This essay should be handed in by Monday” is not as clear to a dyslexic student as “Please hand in this essay by Monday”.
7. • Bullet points
  - and double spacing help break up text into meaningful chunks.
  - Try to have short chunks of text with good spacing in between.
8. The background and the color of the print on a computer can be adjusted to suit the student.
9. Dyslexic students find 12/14 points more acceptable, **larger print** or **bold** is not always useful
10. Dyslexic students are often global thinkers; they like to see the whole picture. A mind-map can be very helpful for comprehension and retention.

*This article was prepared with the help of work done with Julie Northey and Doreen Jones Dyslexia support Team MAES (Manchester Adult Education Services) 2000-2007*

**References;**

Sunderland H., Klein C., Savinson R. & Partridge T. (1997). *Dyslexia and the Bilingual Learner: Assessing and teaching adults and young people who speak English as an additional language*. London Language and Literacy Unit.

Spiegel, M.& Sunderland, H.(2006). *A Teacher’s Guide Teaching Basic Literacy to ESOL Learners*. London: London: LLU+ and London South Bank Univ.

I have used dyslexia friendly hand-outs in mixed classes of dyslexic and non-dyslexic students. The dyslexic students found it easy to follow and avoided frustration and damage to their self esteem. I really enjoy the diversity of putting into practice all I have learnt during my 30 years as an ESOL tutor; from courses on the Ron Davis method – ‘Gift of Dyslexia’ from Brain Gym, mind-mapping courses and on courses in ESOL and the bilingual learner.

*Elizabeth Shapiro (BA General, including General Linguistics, from Manchester University, UK 1967 ; RSA Dip TESL 1975 ; CENTRA, SpLd Adults with Dyslexia, 1997) worked as ESOL Tutor for 30 years, from 1977 through 2007 for Manchester Adult Education Services. She is retired but continues to teach and give support to ESOL students suffering from dyslexia for MAES (Manchester Adult Education Services).*

## CURSIVE WRITING FOR DYSLEXIC STUDENTS

Leah Urso M.Ed. Special Education ([morahleah@morahleahmusic.com](mailto:morahleah@morahleahmusic.com))

Most students want to learn cursive handwriting. Cursive, like drawing, is a learnable skill. I have found that even students with very poor printing skills can learn cursive, succeed and feel proud of their accomplishment. In many cases, their printing also improved after learning cursive.

Teaching cursive is a good way to start the year and is a good review of the alphabet. I teach cursive to students grades 4-8.

### Materials:

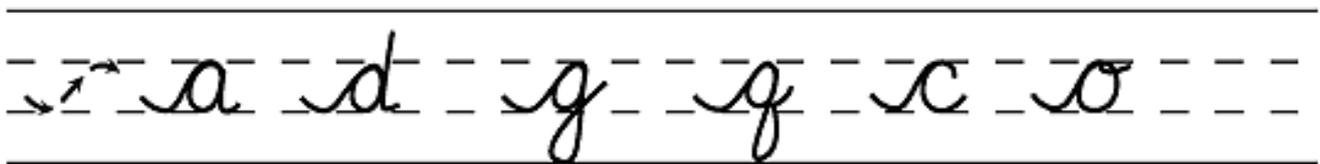
You will need a good cursive poster in front of the room with lower case and capital letters. I use "Zane-Bloser Cursive".

Make copies of a letter chart for each student to use as a reference. Require the students to bring regular lined paper (not a notebook).

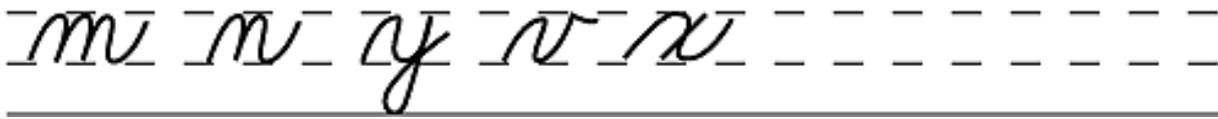
Dyslexic students and students with Sensory Motor disabilities benefit from cursive writing for the following reasons:

- The pencil never leaves the page – the continuous flow of letters trains the hand's "memory", improving hand-eye coordination and manual dexterity.
- The flow from left to right prevents reversals of letters such as b/d or p/q.
- The over-curves, under-curves and loops of cursive give students practice visualizing distance, proportion and space.
- There is a clear distinction between capital letters and lower case.
- Students can write faster in cursive.

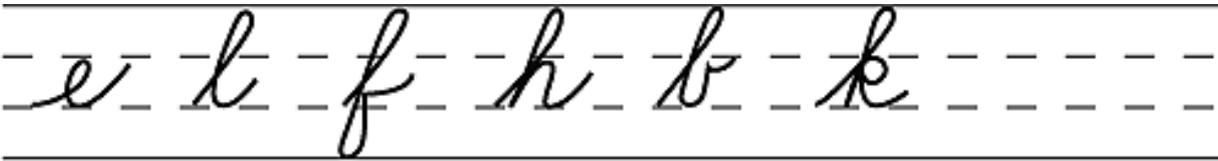
### Down-curve letters: a d g q c o



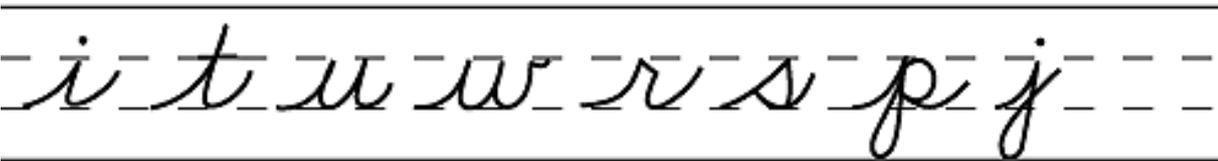
- 1) Begin with the small letter "a". Draw horizontal parallel lines on the board. Draw a wave (see above). Next, model drawing an "a". When you get to the top of the wave, trace back down and around. Show them that when connecting a row of the letter "a", you must go, "up, back and around". Repeat this phrase often.
- 2) Have the students "pretend draw" the letter "a" in the air with their index finger (turn your back and model the motion). Connect "a's" in the air, saying, "Up, back and around".
- 3) Students now write on paper. They must sit with feet together under the desk. Make sure the margin line is on the left. The paper should be tilted to the left for right-handed students (and tilted to the right for left-handed students). Instruct the students to begin next to the margin line and to make a row of individual a's, TWO spaces high.
- 4) Next, make a row of connecting a's. Walk around the room and make sure their pencils are going "up, back, and around". Once they get this principle (up, back and around), they can begin making smaller a's one space high. When they succeed, be sure to give lots of praise!
- 5) The letter "d" begins with a wave, just like letter "a". The letters "d" and "t" do not go all the way to the top line.
- 6) The letter "g" also begins with a wave, but hangs straight down and touches the bottom line.
- 7) Teach letters "q" and "c". Always model each letter on the board first, using parallel lines.
- 8) The letter "o" begins with a wave, but loops off the top. Have students make rows of "o's". Now students can write "dog" and "dad".

**Over-curve letters: m n y v x**

- 1) Teach “m” and “n”. Have the students write “no”, “man” and “mom”.
- 2) Teach “y”, “v”, and “x”. The letter “y” must hang down all the way to the bottom line. Now they can write “van” and “ox”.

**Letters with loops: e l f h b k**

Teach each letter in the above order. The “l” and “h” touch the top line. Students can now write “leg”, “fox”, “yak”, and “neck” (model each word on the board).

**Under-curve letters: i t u w r s p j**

Teach each letter in the above order. The letter t, like the letter d, does not quite touch the top line. The cross is exactly on the line. Students can write “you”, “summer”, “winter”, “sun”, and “print”

**Capital letters**

Teach the capital letters last. Start with capital “I”. Have them practice writing their own name, the days of the week, or the months of the year. Give them short spelling tests in cursive. Begin with just five words.

**Sources:** British Dyslexia Association, 2008

*Leah Urso received her B.S. and Masters of Education, Special Education from Tennessee State University. She currently teaches English at the Gush Etzion Regional School in Alon Shvut. A lifelong professional musician, Leah incorporates music into her English curriculum. Website: <http://www.morahleahmusic.com>*

## *Ed Extras*

Helpful information about learning brought to you by Reading Rockets, Colorín Colorado, and LD OnLine

### **HEALTHY HEARING**

Healthy hearing is critical to a child's speech and language development, communication, learning, and social development. Children who do not hear well are at an increased risk of becoming struggling readers. An estimated 10-15% of all school-aged children have some type of hearing loss. Some of these children are born with a hearing problem (which can get progressively worse), but healthy young children can develop hearing loss at any time as a result of:

- frequent ear infections
- infectious diseases like measles, chicken pox, meningitis, or flu
- head injury
- exposure to loud noise or music

Many school-aged children with acquired hearing loss are not diagnosed properly or early enough. Here are some common signs that your child may have developed a hearing problem:

- You have to raise your voice consistently to get your child's attention
- Your child complains of ear pain or is pulling on his ear
- Your child watches your face carefully when you are talking and turns his head so that one ear is facing the direction of your voice
- Your child frequently asks for things to be repeated
- Your child talks in an unusually soft or loud voice
- Your child turns up the television or CD player louder than usual
- Your child confuses sounds that are alike, and is having problems with spelling and phonics
- Your child seems inattentive at home or at school, and may say he doesn't like school

If you or your child's teacher suspects that your child has a hearing problem, first visit your **pediatrician** for a check up. An ear infection requires immediate treatment.

Have your child's hearing evaluated by a certified **audiologist**, who will determine the severity of the hearing loss.

If your child acquires a long-term or permanent hearing loss, you should seek out a certified **speech-language pathologist** who will measure your child's speech and language skills and help develop special remedial programs, if needed.

For help in finding a certified audiologist or speech-language pathologist, visit the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's online directory: [www.asha.org/findpro/](http://www.asha.org/findpro/)

ASHA also has a great website ("Listen to Your Buds") that teaches children to protect their hearing through safe use of portable audio players: [www.listentoyourbuds.org](http://www.listentoyourbuds.org)

For more information on speech, language, and hearing, visit: [www.ReadingRockets.org/article/c522](http://www.ReadingRockets.org/article/c522)

*Reading Rockets, Colorín Colorado, and LD OnLine are services of public television station WETA, Washington, D.C. Reading Rockets is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. Colorín Colorado, a web service to help English language learners become better readers, receives major funding from the American Federation of Teachers. Additional funding is provided by the National Institute for Literacy and the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. LD OnLine is the world's leading website on learning disabilities and ADHD, with major funding from Lindamood-Bell Learning Processes.*

## COMMON SIGNS OF DYSLEXIA

Reading problems can be tough on the whole family. If your child is struggling, the first thing to do is to find out why. Dyslexia is the most common cause of reading, writing and spelling difficulties. It's a learning disability that can affect both boys and girls, and is more common in children whose parents also had difficulty with reading and writing.

Children with dyslexia can go on to become successful readers, but it's important to get extra help early!

### Common signs

If these signs remind you of your child, talk with your child's teacher to see what extra help they can offer. If difficulties persist, talk to the principal about getting a free evaluation for your child.

### Preschool

- May talk later than most children
- May have difficulty pronouncing words
- May be slow to add new vocabulary words
- May be unable to recall the right word
- May have difficulty with rhyming
- May have trouble learning the alphabet, numbers, days of the week, colors, or shapes
- May have difficulty learning how to write his or her name
- May be unable to follow multi-step directions or routines
- May have difficulty telling and/or retelling a story in the correct sequence

### Kindergarten through fourth grade

- Often has difficulty separating sounds in words and blending sounds to make words
- Has difficulty reading single words
- May be slow to learn the connection between letters and sounds
- May confuse small words - at/to, said/and, does/goes
- Makes consistent reading and spelling errors
- May have trouble remembering facts
- May be slow to learn new skills; relies heavily on memorizing without understanding
- May be impulsive and prone to accidents
- May have difficulty planning
- Often uses an awkward pencil grip
- May have trouble learning to tell time

Adapted from *ABC's of Dyslexia*. (2000). International Dyslexia Association.

For more information on common signs of dyslexia, visit [LDOnline.org](http://LDOnline.org) Visit our sister sites, [ColorinColorado.org](http://ColorinColorado.org) and [ReadingRockets.org](http://ReadingRockets.org), for more information about learning.



*Reading Rockets, Colorín Colorado, and LD OnLine are services of public television station WETA, Washington, D.C. Reading Rockets is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. Colorín Colorado, a web service to help English language learners become better readers, receives major funding by the American Federation of Teachers. Additional funding is provided by the National Institute for Literacy, and the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. LD OnLine is the world's leading website on learning disabilities and ADHD, with major funding from Lindamood-Bell Learning Processes.*

## A NEW COLUMN Questions from you!

*Aharona Korman Gvaryahu, the National Counselor in the English Inspectorate for issues related to learning disabilities, responds to letters sent in by ETAI members.*

*This column is planned as a regular feature in the ETAI Forum. If YOU have a question about learning difficulties or about teaching learners with learning difficulties, write to Aharona or the ETAI Forum and she will answer you. In our first letter, a teacher asks how to deal with the different accommodations specified for her pupils.*

Hi everyone! My name is Aharona Korman Gvaryahu, and for many years I have been the National Counselor for teachers with learners who have learning disabilities, special needs learners in both special education settings and regular classes, and learners who seem to be having difficulty succeeding in learning English as foreign language. As the years go by, more and more learners are diagnosed as having learning disabilities and this is NOT because people have extra cash around for assessments.

It is very important to remember that learning disabilities are very real. All of you who teach know that there are learners who just seem to have more difficulty than others. The purpose of the diagnosis is to understand whether or not the child or young adult has a learning disability or if the difficulties or the lack of knowledge are a result of something else. In addition, it seems that more and more learners are being diagnosed because we now identify more of our learners as having serious difficulties that are inconsistent with their obvious abilities. One of the main reasons that learners are referred for assessment is because something about their school success or lack of it does not make sense. There are gaps in their test scores, gaps between subjects, differences between testing and classroom work, differences between tests on certain days, and internal gaps between who they seem to be and who they present as in writing. Those gaps are the surprises and challenge for the teacher and the struggle for the learner and their family.

All learners need teachers who understand how they learn, how they succeed and what seems to be difficult. All teachers want to succeed. This is perhaps the greatest challenge – especially with learners with learning disabilities. Often, instead of really teaching – teachers feel bogged down with dealing with the modifications and accommodations – not knowing what is appropriate and how to make them work. This column is here for you, to help and support, to suggest and to listen, to share and to learn from you.

I am offering one multi-level question that seems to represent many of the questions that I receive by e-mail and phone every day.

Please feel free to write to this column (etaiforum@gmail.com) or email me (gvaryahu@gmail.com) with your questions.

Dear Aharona,

Here is my question. I have two learners with different modifications, both are in 7th grade.

**Learner 1:**

הקראת שאלון עם ווקמן  
בחינה בע"פ לאחר הבחינה בכתב

**Learner 2:**

הקראת שאלון עם ווקמן  
הקראת תשובות לבוחן ניטרלי

My questions are:

1. Do the Bagrut accommodations apply to them, even though they are only in 7th grade?
2. Does learner one do the whole exam?
3. What are the differences between the two learners learning difficulties? Why does learner two just read his written answers, while learner one is tested orally after doing the written test?

Is it my job to teach them how to use the walkman for testing purposes, and if so, where can I learn how to do this?

Sincerely,  
AB, Jr. High School teacher

Dear AB,

Thanks for your questions.

I will try to answer them as they appear in your letter.

Before I answer however, it is necessary to clarify that both learners have recommendations that seemingly contradict themselves.

An oral exam includes both being read to and dictating answers. According to the LD guidelines ([cms.education.gov.il/EducationCMS/Units/Tochniyot\\_Limudim/Special/tochniyot/English.htm](http://cms.education.gov.il/EducationCMS/Units/Tochniyot_Limudim/Special/tochniyot/English.htm), [http://cms.education.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/072E4999-2B61-4A96-993E-424FA9103A9A/82133/3A7\\_1d\\_doc\\_for\\_09\\_1.doc](http://cms.education.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/072E4999-2B61-4A96-993E-424FA9103A9A/82133/3A7_1d_doc_for_09_1.doc)) this kind of testing is appropriate for learners diagnosed with a learning disability who have severe difficulties in both reading and writing. This appears to be the case with both learner number one and learner number two. So if it is recommended that a learner listen to recorded tests, and then it is recommended that he or she be tested orally after writing the test or dictating answers to a tape – these learners require a reader who will then write down the learner's answers. We really believe that this should take place in very, very rare cases and all attempts should be made, especially during the junior high school years, to reinforce reading and writing skills so that the learner continues to learn and learns how to read and write as well. An oral exam means both being read to and dictating answers to the tester.

Following are my answers to your questions:

1. ***Do the Bagrut accommodations apply, even though they are only in 7th grade?***

Assessments are accepted and are considered up to date for learners from grade 7 to grade 12. In other words, a learner who has an evaluation from September first of seventh grade can use that assessment until he completes his matriculation requirements.

The issue of Bagrut modifications is a problematic one. Theoretically, yes, the modifications recommended in the assessment should carry the learner through Jr. High and High school. However, some modifications are really only for high school. Some are more appropriate for Jr. High school only.

Learner one has mixed modifications. The first modification of listening to a recorded examination/quizzes etc. is appropriate only after learning how to use recorded material. I highly recommend using the recorded material (tape/ cd / mp3-4) from eighth grade onward. That way the learner is properly prepared and actually can become an independent learner and reader. In addition, using recorded material helps with homework and class work as well, since all of the APPROVED textbooks are recorded and very accessible. Then when the Bagrut begins, these learners are prepared. In some cases, learning how to use recorded material is what makes access to texts possible, and learners who use the recorded material actually begin reading as well. Sometimes, if the process begins early enough and is properly done, these learners learn how to read well enough to work alone. It's important to keep in mind that a recording helps only those who have some reading skills. Listening to a recorded passage without being able to read at all turns the test or assignment into a memory based task.

An oral exam after a written one is only appropriate for Jr. High school years. This kind of evaluation is to encourage the learner to answer questions in writing and then evaluate their knowledge of the language by having them add information orally. Teachers are often surprised at the difference, and only then understand what the learner really does know. Once the Bagrut years begin this is no longer a possibility and the learners are given the accommodation of an oral test OR can dictate their answers to a tape.

Learner two must be tech wiz, and must have excellent powers of attention to be able to BOTH listen to the test from a recording and record his answers on a tape, which in English is dictation to a neutral tester. Doing this is extremely difficult and tension provoking. Some learners can learn how to do this, but it is challenging particularly for Jr. High school learners whose English language skills are still developing. This kind of a learner, just as other one, needs to learn how to read and write. I would recommend either reading to the learner and having him or her dictate answers from around the middle of eighth grade, or working with the learner on learning how to listen to recorded tests and to write as much as possible.

Learners who cannot write or for whom writing is terribly difficult due to severe dysgraphia should be encouraged to answer a few questions in writing and then be tested orally.

2. *Does learner one do the whole exam?*

In 7th grade, I would suggest testing the learner orally on questions from each section if doing the entire examination requires more than one hour from the tester. Otherwise, it is always advisable to expose the learner to the entire examination

3. *What are the differences between the two learners learning difficulties? Why does learner two just read his written answers, while learner one is tested orally after doing the written test?*

I think that the answer to this question is not the difference between the two learners but rather between the evaluators. In other words, the first evaluator may be an educational psychologist who has the authority to recommend oral testing, while the other – an educational evaluator - מאבחנת דידיקטית - who has the authority to recommend – the reader/ tape. That said, it is indeed possible that the first learner has terrible handwriting, or has a speech difficulty making it impossible to understand a recording that he or she makes.

Is it my job to teach them how to use the walkman for testing purposes, and if so, where can I learn how to do this?

Yes, it is your job to teach them how to use a cd player / walkman / mp player for testing purposes, and I would be happy to give a workshop on how to do that to you and all of the teachers from your school who are interested.

All the best and thanks so much for your question.

Please remember, testing is important but class work and the actual learning English is much more important.

Aharon

*Aharon Korman Gvaryahu is the National Counselor for teachers with learners who have learning disabilities, special needs learners in both special education settings and regular classes and learners who seem to be having difficulty succeeding in learning English as foreign language. She teaches at Levinsky Academic College where she coordinates the program for bi-lingual assessment of learning abilities and disabilities. She lectures at Givat Washington College and works with the Center For Learning Abilities under the auspices of the ORT Educational Network.*



**Special discovery:  
There are "Four Sides  
to the Triangle"!**

Laugh and cry with Ruth  
as she adapts herself to  
Israeli schools!

By Aura Kruss

*A veteran teacher tells it  
like it was. A delightful and  
entertaining read.  
Zippora (Israel)*

*I laughed and cried with Ruth.  
Clairie (South Africa)*

*Absolutely loved the book. I was  
amazed at the shenanigans the  
kids put teachers through.  
Gail (U.S.A)*

*It's the perfect book for teachers,  
pupils and their parents  
Doron (Israel)*

"Four Sides to the Triangle" available through Amazon.  
For further details email: [aurakruss@gmail.com](mailto:aurakruss@gmail.com)

## NETSURFING

Miri Yochanna (*miri.yochanna@gmail.com*)

Hi all, this time Netsurfing is dedicated solely to sites on learning disabilities. I started with the most popular and well known sites that I am aware of. The other two are extremely useful as well and offer distinctive features.

I am sure we can all find something useful in these sites, even if we don't teach a specific LD class. The tips and the information is something that we could all use. There are some things we could use to make our own lives easier.

Remember if you have a site you like in particular and think it would be worthwhile sharing with others, email me at *miri.yochanna@gmail.com*

| Name                                                                   | LD Online                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
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| Address: <a href="http://www.ldonline.org">http://www.ldonline.org</a> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Category                                                               | Resource                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| What's in the site?                                                    | <p>This site offers so much information on LD and ADHD, on working with children with LD and with ADHD, on helping your own children if they have a learning disability.</p> <p>The information is diverse and it is aimed at both parents and educators, as well as for the children themselves. There is also a section for advice from experts where you can direct questions to specific experts on line and receive help or information.</p> <p>There is even a store that offers lots of useful material.</p> |
| My personal favorite                                                   | <p>I love the Questions and Answers section. Here you can find answers to so many of the issues we are all faced with in class every day, no matter what age group we teach (even at the college level). It's nice to get the expert information to questions posed by people from all over the world.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Possible uses                                                          | <p>This site is highly valuable for those of us who feel at a loss sometimes when we are faced with a child who is suddenly misbehaving but we have a feeling that it's not directed at us personally. It's an excellent source of information and it's extremely reassuring to know that there is somewhere to turn to at all hours of the day (and night).</p>                                                                                                                                                    |

NOTE: You can sign up for a newsletter and get updates in your email.

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| <b>Name</b>                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>AACAP – American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Address: <a href="http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts_for_families/children_with_learning_disabilities">http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts_for_families/children_with_learning_disabilities</a> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Category</b>                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>Reference and resource</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| What's in the site?                                                                                                                                                                            | <p>This site is one section of a really large site, the AACAP. The overall site is quite extensive and offers a lot of information on a huge variety of topics, so that's well worth the time you'll spend surfing it.</p> <p>But I want to relate only to the link I've placed above. Here you can find information – mainly aimed at parents but definitely worthwhile for us teachers- about children with learning disabilities. The information is descriptive and easy to understand. Furthermore, it offers links, directly in the passages, to more information and further explanation on various issues, for example it talks about 'difficulty paying attention' and that link takes you to a detailed article on children who have problems paying attention. The information is so clear and easy to read, it offers you an opportunity to really understand the child who is considered LD.</p> |
| My personal favorite                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>I loved the clear easy to understand information offered to the reader. I also liked that everything is explained and linked so that you always find an answer to a question. There is so much information and so many links for each topic.</p> <p>There is also an option of asking a further question but unfortunately the response doesn't come to you directly, rather they use it improve the website. So maybe in the future, your question will be answered.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Possible uses                                                                                                                                                                                  | This site offers a wealth of information for the teacher and it helps to further understand and to learn how to approach the children with some kind of learning disability.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

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| <b>Name</b>                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>Family Education</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Address: <a href="http://school.familyeducation.com/special-education/learning-disabilities/36097.htm">http://school.familyeducation.com/special-education/learning-disabilities/36097.htm</a> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Category</b>                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>Reference and resources for use</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| What's in the site?                                                                                                                                                                            | <p>This is a wonderful site that offers not only information but online quizzes to test your own knowledge, your children as well as a wonderful collection of tools, ideas, strategies and tips.</p> <p>There is a section of resources that gives explanations but then there are sections that are divided into age groups, tips, coping tools, ideas for working with the children, helping children with LD move into adulthood easily as well as other wonderful tools.</p> |
| My personal favorite                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>I loved the tips – called Toolkits – section. The information here is so clear and easy to implement with the children. Each toolkit leads to a collection of more specific toolkits. It's absolutely wonderful. There are even fun projects to do with the children.</p> <p>The other thing I really liked was the 'Quiz' on the myths. I personally scored 100%. I must say I was proud. Check it out, how much do you know?</p>                                             |
| Possible uses                                                                                                                                                                                  | This site offers so many tips, they will help you incorporate them into your lessons ensuring the students learn new behaviors and methods to help them study more effectively..                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

NOTE: You can sign up for their very informative newsletter.

*Miri Yochanna has been an EFL teacher and teacher trainer for almost 20 years. She is currently a teacher trainer at Seminar Hakibbutzim and she is also working at CET (Center for Educational Technology) heading up the English division of a new Item Bank Project. She has been developing various teaching materials for many years and has written a number of course books for elementary school and has edited several others.*

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

This year marks the thirtieth  
(that's right 30th!)  
year since ETAI's inception.



Help celebrate the occasion by sending  
in short anecdotes and memories about  
ETAI throughout the years.

We're waiting to hear from you!  
Send your contributions to:  
[etaiforum@gmail.com](mailto:etaiforum@gmail.com)



***DON'T MISS IT!***

**The 6<sup>th</sup> ETAI International Conference**  
will be taking place mid-July, 2010, in Jerusalem.

We will be welcoming colleagues and friends from abroad to our  
**sixth international conference** where we will meet celebrities in the  
world of English teaching and colleagues from around the globe.

We are looking for committed ETAI members to join the teams of volunteers to  
make this event a real success. People interested in offering their expertise, be it  
stuffing folders, counting money, organizing tours around Jerusalem, hosting out-  
of-towners or participating in any of the many aspects of organizing and running  
the event should contact the ETAI office ([etaioffice@gmail.com](mailto:etaioffice@gmail.com)) or Valerie  
Jakar ([vsjakar@gmail.com](mailto:vsjakar@gmail.com)). ***You don't need to live in Jerusalem in  
order to help out. We need YOU!***

## English Teachers' Association of Israel

*Be sure to include ETAI in your summer plans!*

# ETAI Annual National Conference

**July 6-7<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

Himmelfarb High School  
6 Torah V'Avodah St.  
Bayit Vegan, Jerusalem

### **Plenary speakers:**

Prof. Ramon Lewis, Latrobe University, Australia  
Penny Ur, Oranim College, Chairperson of ETAI  
Dr. Judy Steiner, Chief Inspector  
for English Language Education

### **Keynote speakers:**

MaryIn Appelbaum, Educator and author  
Yirmi Stavitsky, Principal of Himmelfarb



A wide variety of topics will be presented. Here are just a few:

- "From NON Readers to WON Readers"*
- "Start with a Bang and 'Hook' the Student"*
- "Serious Fun for Learners!"*
- "Bad Language – In and Out of Class"*
- "Worksheets that Work!"*
- "How to Run a Readathon"*
- "What Do Ben & Jerry's, iPod and Yoga Have in Common?"*

### **Registration Fees:**

|                                                                                                                               |         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| ETAI members who pre-register by June 10th<br>(Fill out and mail the yellow pre-registration<br>form included with the Forum) | 100 NIS |
| Student members of ETAI                                                                                                       | 50 NIS  |
| Non-members                                                                                                                   | 220 NIS |

Don't forget the impressive book exhibition,  
with over twenty companies represented!

For more information, call the ETAI office: 02-500-1844