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

The letter from the Chair is a lovely opportunity to have my say on things I feel strongly about. This time it's testing – or rather, assessment in general – as contrasted with teaching.

It seems to me that we spend an inordinate amount of time on assessment of one kind or another. Sometimes it's the complex 'mapping' of our students' abilities in preparation for school transitions, whether it's practice exams for Meitzav or Bagrut, or just school-initiated tests of one kind or another.

Some assessment, of course, is necessary. For example, employers and higher-education institutions need to have some idea of potential employees' and students' knowledge of English, and the simplest way to judge this is through the Bagrut exams; alternatives are likely to be more expensive and less reliable.

On the other hand, if we are just assessing for school-teaching purposes, then the cost-effectiveness of test-based assessment becomes rather more 'iffy'. Class time spent on doing tests is time taken away from active teaching; and teacher time spent on checking tests and associated paperwork is time taken away from preparing lessons and providing feedback on students' ongoing written work.

And a test does not necessarily teach anything. A test may do exactly the opposite if it is failed. As Michael Swan says: testing in the hope of improving learning outcomes is like taking the temperature of a patient in the hope of making them better.

I'm not against regular tests as part of teaching: for example, telling students to review a set of lexical items for a dictation on Wednesday. That feeds into learning: it encourages review, it motivates (provided you make sure that the test is likely to be done well!), it supports learning. But surprise quizzes, or elaborate tests, or individual mapping, or constant 'rehearsal' of the format of the state exams – all these feed into learning very little, and use up valuable teaching time.

How much do we really need all these in order to know how much our students know? Most of us have a pretty good idea through regular classroom interaction and homework. An end-of-term test on all the material learnt during a term or semester is useful as a back-up to our own teacher assessment for school report (הנפקה) purposes (and reinforces learning if students know about it in advance and can prepare) – but why do we need any more than this and the occasional 'dictation' type review test mentioned above?

What's called 'alternative assessment' – portfolios, logs, self-assessment – may or may not solve the problem. The key question remains: how much energy and time are being invested in the assessment as compared with the amount of real learning benefit?

To a very large extent, assessment is at the expense of teaching, and gets almost as much attention these days. But surely, if we are called 'teachers': our work should be, essentially, teaching: providing opportunities for pupils to learn, rather than taking their temperatures all the time.

Penny Ur (*pennyur@gmail.com*)
ETAI Chairperson

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

It's the height of the summer, and since you obviously have tons of free time on your hands, we decided to make sure that you will not be short on reading material. This issue of the ETAI Forum is a special double issue, published as such for the Sixth International ETAI Conference, Linking Through Language. You'll read articles by teachers working at all levels of the educational system, from elementary through university. The contributors are also at different points of their career, from beginning teacher through retired educator. And the topics of the articles are just as diverse as their authors; there are articles giving ideas for implementing various activities in the classroom, there are articles about teaching literature, there are articles presenting research carried out by teachers in the field and other articles with advice on how to help kids who are having difficulties coping. You can read about different things going on in the field, about many of the ETAI events that took place throughout the year and about colleagues whose contribution to ETAI and EFL has been recognized. And of course no issue of the ETAI Forum would be complete without book reviews or the netsurfing column. So, settle down, relax, dig in and have a great vacation!

Michele Ben and Amanda Caplan, ETAI Forum co-editors

WINTER IN BEER SHEVA

Mitzi Geffen (mitzi100@gmail.com)

This year's winter ETAI conference was held at Ben Gurion University, generously sponsored by the Foreign Literatures and Linguistics Department, on December 13, 2009. The venue was perfect – spacious and elegant, the university staff was friendly and helpful. Even the weather cooperated, giving us a sunny, mild day. UPP topped off the creature comforts by generously subsidizing a tasty lunch of sandwiches, veggies and drinks. Coffee flowed all day and most of us adopted the principle that calories from "sufganiot" don't count when they are eaten at an ETAI conference on Hanukah.

Teachers came early to browse the huge book and materials exhibition, including stands of 25 publishers, many offering little gifts and bonuses to their customers. Everyone enjoyed schmoozing and comparing notes over the large choice of textbooks and readers, along with a great deal of other types of EFL materials displayed.

Before the first plenary talk, we were treated to a rhymed introduction to the Masters program in Foreign Literatures and Linguistics by the department chair, Dr. Ariel Cohen, followed by a Powerpoint presentation giving the details of the program by Dr. Barbara Hochman, Head of Graduate Studies.

Dr. Judy Steiner, our first plenary speaker, gave us a guided tour of the extremely useful site: http://cms.education.gov.il/educationcms/units/mazkirut_pedagogit/english/whatsnew/ which is an invaluable resource for every English teacher in Israel.

Dr. Tova Rappaport, our second plenary speaker, regaled us with examples of actual spoken English as opposed to

purely grammatically correct English and spoke about our dilemma as English teachers of trying to resolve the differences when we teach our students English.

Our final plenary speaker, Dr. Miriam Shlesinger, drew a big crowd, despite the late afternoon hour, talking about "What 'translationese' can teach us about learners' errors".

The varied parallel sessions and workshops in between the plenary talks offered something for everyone – including using games in the classroom, teaching literature, teaching vocabulary, and using technology, drama, songs and/or poetry to teach English. The attendees benefited from the generosity of all the presenters who willingly volunteered their time preparing and giving presentations, sharing their professional knowledge.

All in all it was a stimulating and enriching day, enjoyed by all who attended. Many thanks to Dr. Eitan Bar-Yosef, from the Foreign Literatures and Linguistics Department, for being our sponsor and liaison with the university, and smoothing out any difficulty or misunderstanding that arose. Mitzi Geffen and Michele Ben, co-conveners, appreciate the involvement of all others who lent a hand in making this day a success.

Mitzi Geffen is an English teacher and coordinator of the English department at Makif AMIT, Beer Sheva, where she also produces an annual English musical with students who choose to participate. She is an instructor for the online new literature module courses, and, after ETAI's International Conference, will follow Penny Ur as Chair of ETAI.

THE ETAI SPRING CONFERENCE

Amanda Caplan (amandacaplan@gmail.com)

Many of you may have been busy cleaning your houses on March 25th, but some of us decided that Spring cleaning would wait for a day in honour of the "Haifa" conference. Actually it wasn't in Haifa, it was held just outside at Carmel Zvulun School on Kibbutz Yagur. It is a lovely school – modern and airy, with places to sit and hang out and lots of parking. In fact, it has everything that my own school doesn't have, so you may detect just a slight hint of jealousy here! Tearing myself away from my Pesach cleaning was more than worth it for other reasons too. I dusted my brains, brushed away cobwebs and was swept away, awash with lots of new and exciting ideas.

The day opened with a beautiful musical number, putting us all in the right mood for the more serious

sessions ahead. The three plenary sessions, given by Dr. Judy Steiner, the Chief Inspector for English Language Education, Kevin McCaughey from the American Embassy and Dr. Avi Tsur, English Inspector for the Rural Sector were informative, in parts entertaining and certainly enlightening. There was lots of food for thought to consider over the Pesach holiday, and calorie-free too!

And if this weren't enough, there were over fifteen workshops and lectures to choose from. Subjects covered ranged from literature, to grammar, vocabulary, music in the classroom, methodology – in fact, everything a teacher needs to survive the classroom and be a better teacher.

By the end of the day, we were ready to go home

feeling polished and better-equipped as teachers and professionals. Thank you to all the conveners: Sarah Cove, Yosef Daghash, Lily Khoury, Miriam Melamed,

Aviva Shapiro, Fran Sokel, Jennifer Spigelman, Avi Tsur and Penny Ur. And a special thanks to Jackie Teplitz whose tremendous help was much appreciated by all!

ETAI MINI-CONFERENCE AT ORT EL HOASHALLAH

Laurie Ornstein (laurenmadeline@gmail.com)

Many consider the Negev a deserted region, endless brown and yellow landscape with barely a tree on the horizon and perhaps a few camels grazing by the roadside. I say to, “Look again!” On April 25 you would have seen a caravan of cars headed southeast on Route 25 from Beersheva towards Dimona to the first ETAI mini-conference at ORT El Hoashallah School.

Following warm greetings and an overview of this new Bedouin school and its vision by Principal Yusuf El Hoashallah, participants enjoyed workshops geared to elementary, junior and senior high school. These included: “Elementary Drama”, dramatic fun and chanting in elementary school classes, presented by teachers, Carla Nochomovitz and Rananah Gold together with Kaye College students, Nabila Alnabary and Ella Kutsky; “Hootenanny”, bringing the sound of music/songs into your classroom, presented by Laurie Ornstein; “Add some drama to your teaching”, a session on drama activities in class, with Mitzi Geffen; and “English is Fun with Songs and Games” with Kara Aharon. We appreciate the frank and appreciative feedback we received on all of these sessions.

We experienced true Bedouin hospitality with refreshments provided for us by our host school. The teachers’ room, laden with coffee, tea and cookies, served as another meeting place for informal encounters among conference participants.

The EFL materials and book exhibition also added to the festive and professional conference atmosphere.

The conference’s true success can be credited to the English Department of Kaye College that made the event an integral part of their studies for all their pre-service and in-service student teachers. Both students and teachers took part in the workshops and shared their enthusiasm for this afternoon’s special “school trip”. I’d like to extend my deepest thanks to Inessa Roe at Kaye for her unending efforts to support the conference and hope this ETAI mini-conference in the desert was the first of many.

I want to extend my appreciation and gratitude to Principal Yusuf El Hoashallah who graciously and generously hosted the conference at his school. His warm hospitality made us all feel welcome. I’m sure everyone who attended will agree with me that this was a perfect venue.

Thanks also to Kara Aharon, my co-convenor, without whom, this mini-conference idea would not have become a reality.

Laurie Ornstein teaches at The High School for Environmental Studies at Midreshet Ben Gurion and is a counselor for EFL teachers in the ORT Negev Bedouin schools. She is a folksinger-songwriter who performs and conducts workshops in EFL classrooms around the country. In addition, she facilitates workshops at teachers colleges and at conferences, showing teachers how to incorporate songs and songwriting into their lessons. A year ago, she released her first album, “Time Flows Backwards”.

ETAI MINI-CONFERENCE AT OHALO COLLEGE IN KAZRIN

Dr. Yehudit Od-Cohen (yocg@netvision.net.il) and Michelle Kinsbursky (kins@macam.ac.il)

On Thursday, January 28th a mini ETAI Conference was conducted for the first time at Ohalo College in Kazrin. The conference was organized by the English department team and headed by Dr. Yehudit Od-Cohen and Michelle Kinsbursky.

The aim of our mini conference was to promote English teachers’ professional development. In addition, by holding the conference in the Golan heights, it was an opportunity to bring together the English teachers working in the Upper Galilee and Golan area and the

Ohalo Academic Institution for Teacher Education which could serve as a platform for an exchange of ideas, a framework for mutual learning and sharing and an opportunity to express ideas about English teaching in our region. With the assistance of the English inspectorate, all teachers and student teachers teaching in the Jewish, Arab and the Druze sector in our area were invited.

The mini conference opened with greetings from the English inspector of the Jewish sector in the North,

Fran Sokel and was followed by an introductory lecture delivered by Professor Penny Ur who presented a comprehensive review of the latest research on teaching vocabulary with some surprising findings for the audience to consider.

The mini-conference offered lectures and workshops on various topics related to teaching English at the different levels. Dr. Dror Abend-David, the Head of the English Department at Ohalo College, described the new English BEd program which we hope will be instituted in the next year or so. Dr. Ruwaida Abu Nassar from Beit Berl College spoke about possible difficulties facing Arab speaking students who study English. An interesting presentation about the results of research conducted on integrating emergent readers in the 5th Grade was delivered by Leah Nachmani from Hadekel School in Karmiel.

Other presentations included promoting reading through art work, developing reading comprehension skills through the three levels of reading, using Internet materials for developing language by the British Council, teaching English to students with ADHD characteristics, and creating songs for the ELC.

The conference was sponsored by the college and Israel's

faithful English book publishers and game producers – we would like to extend a BIG thank you to Eric Cohen Books, UPP publishers, ZigZag Language Games, the British Council, and EnglishNet for their significant and generous contributions that certainly helped in upgrading our event and we appreciate their willingness to come all the way up to the Golan for this Ohalo ETAI event.

Dr. Yehudit Od-Cohen has been a member of the Ohalo English department for the past 12 years. She has been a counselor of English teachers in the Northern region for many years and has conducted and maintained ongoing professional development courses for English teachers. Yehudit's main research interests are mentoring teachers and learning and teaching in higher education.

Michelle Kinsbursky has been teaching learners of all ages since receiving her Teaching Credential, Reading Specialist Credential and MA in Education from the University of California at Berkeley in the US. Michelle began teaching English when she came to Israel in 1984. For the last 14 years she has been teaching English in various colleges in the north – Ohalo, Oranim, Tzemach and Emek Yizrael. Ohalo College in Katzrin is her home base where she is a teacher trainer in the English Department and an EAP instructor.

WHY WAS HOLON'S MINI DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER MINI-CONFERENCES?

Amanda Caplan (amandacaplan@gmail.com)

The mini-conference in Holon in Talpiot College had all the ingredients of an ETAI mini-conference. All the presentations were the high standard that we have learnt to expect and almost take for granted at ETAI conferences.

The afternoon opened with Tsafi Timor's plenary lecture entitle "Narrowing Gaps". Her informative lecture gave us advice on how to bridge the learning gaps that our pupils encounter.

This was followed by three parallel sessions. Nicola Crowley of the British Council showed us how to use wikis for collaborative writing projects. Dr. Avi Tsur stressed the importance of dialogue between the teacher and student, based on Janusz Korzak's theories. Dr. Ilana Cheshin taught us how to create a teaching environment which is suited for the diverse populations that we meet in the classroom.

But Holon had something different to offer us – a meeting between Israeli teachers and colleagues from England brought to Israel by the British Council. The local Inspector, Marsha Hachmon, was an excellent moderator for the panel of two Israeli teachers and two English teachers. It was fascinating hearing our foreign

colleagues discussing the problems of diverse populations and how to bridge the gaps. They encounter many of the same problems that we do, but the resources available in the UK are somewhat different. They talked about their large classes of 25 pupils, the teaching assistants they have with them in the classroom, the five day week and other "hardships". The local teachers couldn't stop laughing. Marsha stepped in very tactfully and explained to our visitors that we weren't laughing at them, but rather at the differences between the systems, and that our amusement came from jealousy and not ridicule. My feeling was that they really admired us and what we deal with on a daily basis. Admiration from a teacher is worth so much; they really understand what they are talking about. So, let's pat ourselves on the back, but on the other hand, we mustn't forget that there's always more to learn – and a mini-conference is a great place to do it!

After working in hi-tech and then as a tour guide, Amanda Caplan became an English teacher. She works at De Shalit Jr. High School in Rehovot. She holds a BA from the University of Manchester and is about to complete an M.Ed in Language Teaching at Oranim College of Education.

THIS YEAR IN REHOVOT! – ETAI MINI-CONFERENCE IN THE CENTRAL REGION

Michele Ben (mgbben@gmail.com)

For the third year running, English teachers from all over the southern area of the central region attended an ETAI mini-conference at the end of February, this time at the Rehovot Teacher's Center (Pisgah Rehovot – Machon Davidson). This year, luckily, the weather was perfect so teachers were able to walk between the rooms where sessions were held without getting wet or muddy!

Teachers of all levels began arriving for registration and browsing in the book exhibition at 15:30 on the dot. By the time the thought-provoking opening lecture by Miriam Kluska, regional inspector, called "Thinking about Thinking in the Classroom" began over one hundred participants had filed into the auditorium. Then, everyone enjoyed delicious sandwiches provided by UPP before heading into the parallel presentations which offered something for teachers at every level. Many participants enjoyed a session given by Nicola Crowley and Jane Cohen of the British Council called, "Storytelling: the language teacher's oldest technique." Since teaching writing is a challenge for us all, the session called "Teaching Students How to Write – Not Mission

Impossible" with Efrat Zipor gave the many attendees great ideas for overcoming the obstacle of written presentation. Those who attended the session by Melodie Rosenfeld called "Individual Learning Differences in the Classroom" left with practical solutions for reaching all the students in their classes. After more time for browsing and refreshments, the afternoon concluded with an enriching lecture by Penny Ur called "Teaching grammar: research, theory and practice." At 19:00 everyone started heading home, armed with great ideas, renewed friendships, and conference kits provided by ECB, AEL, Pearson Education, and WizKids.

A great deal of work and planning helped make this mini-conference a success. Amanda Caplan and Michele Ben organised the conference, with the support of the Central Region Inspector, Dr. Miriam Kluska. Thanks to all the presenters who volunteered their time to make the afternoon so worthwhile. Thanks to Marna Snyder for managing the registration with other volunteers. We hope to see all the participants at next year's ETAI mini in the area!

MAGHAR – A TRADITION THAT KEEPS GETTING BETTER

Jennifer Spigelman (jenspig@gmail.com)

Once more a successful mini-conference was held in the Northern village of Maghar on April 13th. It is hard to describe the atmosphere as over 160 English teachers from all sectors and grade levels arrive at the Mifal Hapais for an afternoon of professional development, material browsing and friendly chatting. The venue was starting to fill up before registration was even officially open.

Eight commercial material providers as well as the American Embassy and British Council filled the hall with tables laden with books and games. The participants munched on refreshments sponsored by UPP and at the same time, packed bags from ECB with various purchased items and some gifts from LPA. We then entered the auditorium for the first of our plenary speakers, Dr Keren Omri of Haifa University, who was sponsored by the US Embassy. She widened our horizons in a talk about literature titled "Popular Culture in American Society". It was intellectually stimulating and gave us a chance to think about what we read for our enjoyment and not only what we teach to our students.

Before we could completely reflect on the plenary we had to choose from seven parallel sessions. The sessions offered a wide variety of options from learning disabilities in elementary schools to helping students move from 3 to 4 points Bagrut. Content based language instruction

was an option as well as teaching English in a changing world. Other sessions focused on writing, interactive websites or film clips in the classroom. The people giving the sessions were as varied as the topics. We had classroom teachers, inspectors, university instructors as well as representatives from both the British Council and the American Embassy. All had come to share with their colleagues.

The closing plenary was Dr Elana Cheshin whose "Teaching Special Learners" gave us plenty of practical ideas to take back to the classroom. What a great way to end the evening!

The feedback we received expressed a desire to have a mini every year and for a full day if possible. I guess will need to start planning right away. But first maybe we should thank this year's incredible team and relax a bit. This years team included Jennifer Spigelman, Sarah Cove, Jackie Teplitz, Yosef Dagash, Omaima Kaldawi 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 an active member of ETAI giving sessions and helping plan conferences.

MINI-ETAI BET YERACH JANUARY 2010

Debbie Gabai (debitor@bezeqint.net)

For the second year running, a very successful Mini Etaï conference organized by Aviva Shapiro took place at Bet Yerach High school on the shores of the Kinneret. The conference was extremely well organized with plenty of time to browse the book exhibit with displays by many well-known publishers. There was a varied selection of lectures; the **healthy** and very tasty food and beverages were provided by UPP.

Teachers came from all over the north and the school campus “lit up” with blue ECB bags!

The opening talk called Reflection, with Aviva’s personal tips for how to encourage students to become our partners in learning and to effectively reflect on their learning process, was well worth attending and was relevant to teachers at all levels, from elementary through high school.

Shelley Ganiel’s presentation on Richard Cory was packed solid and demonstrated how the poem can be taught using the HOTS. The presentation was accompanied by many handouts to help teachers put theory into practice.

Ann Shlapobersky walked many teachers through the changes demanded by our teaching in her talk on Ten Steps Behind and Trying to Catch Up – What can you do?, which was also well attended and provided a great deal of useful ideas.

For the teachers of younger pupils, Sara Cove gave a very interesting presentation about how the practical incorporation of the theories of Vygotsky and Piaget in our small group work in class. Her talk also included great handouts to assist the teacher’s organization especially when teaching reading and spelling

I want to thank Aviva Shapiro and the English department staff of Bet Yerach for investing so much effort in this mini-conference. Thanks also for making us all feel so welcome! I hope that we will have many more enlightening and enjoyable conferences in this pastoral spot.

Debbie Gabai lives in Mitzpe Massad the Lower Galilee. She teaches at Amal Nofraim B’galil and also serves as a teacher counselor for literature.

CALL for ARTICLES!

The deadline for submissions to the Winter 2010 edition of the EТАІ Forum is **October 10th, 2010** and we are anxiously awaiting your contributions. Make your voice heard!

Submit all contributions as WORD (.doc) (**not** docx) documents as an attachment to an e-mail to etaiforum@gmail.com. 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, do not exceed 4,000 words.

Try to keep the language non-sexist and use they instead of he/she.

If you include references, they 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/>. **Cite page numbers in the body of the article if you use a direct quotation.**

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, include brief biodata about your professional life, including where you teach and any other significant information. Include your e-mail address.

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

Please submit your contributions to: etaiforum@gmail.com

ETAI OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION AWARD 2010: ANN SHLAPOBERSKY

Ann Shlapobersky was born in the USA and came to Israel in 1978, where she married and settled on Kfar Kisch, near Mt Tabor. She has been happily married for 31 years and has three grown-up daughters, of whom she is very proud!

She taught English for 18 years, and has since worked for Eric Cohen Books. She holds an MA in Teaching International Communications in English from London University. She has also worked for CET and the Rural Education Department of the Ministry of Education as a CALL counselor.

Ann has been an active member of ETAI for 15 years, and started up the ETAI website in 1999. Ann gives unstintingly of her free time to update, expand and improve the website. She is never flustered by the constant and complex demands ETAI makes on her, and manages to combine efficiency and professionalism with personal warmth, collegiality and a sense of humour.

Ann is one of the key people who has enabled this ETAI conference to fulfill its aim of Linking Through Language, and is a fitting recipient of our 2010 Outstanding Contribution Award. Congratulations, Ann!

AWARD WINNERS

During the past year, three ETAI members were recognized by IATEFL and TESOL and received scholarships to attend their international conferences. Congratulations to Maureen Rajuan, Lynn Goldberg and Naomi Epstein!



Dr. Maureen Rajuan was awarded the John Haycraft Classroom Exploration Scholarship to attend the IATEFL International Conference in Harrogate, UK, in April, 2010. Maureen is a Teacher Trainer in the English Department of Achva Academic College. The subject of her research, "Jewish and Arab Children Communicate across Linguistic Borders", is based on a project in which Jewish student teachers designed a learning unit on Jewish and Arab culture which they taught to Bedouin elementary school pupils in Rahat. Research was carried out to assess the change in attitudes and stereotypes of the children using questionnaires and figure drawings. The project included pen pal communication between Arab and Jewish pupils that culminated in school visits.



Lynn Goldberg currently teaches at three schools: an elementary school, a school for gifted children, and a bilingual school for Arab and Jewish pupils. Her interests are in creative ways of teaching English and stories to young children who are learning English as a second or third language. Lynn was awarded the TESOL Betty Azar Professional Development Travel Grant for practicing ESL / EFL teachers.



For the past twenty-three years Mrs. Naomi Epstein has specialized in teaching English as a foreign language to deaf and hard of hearing pupils in Israel. She has a B.A. in Deaf Education, a B.E.D. in EFL and an M.A. in Curriculum Development. She is the author of two textbooks for these pupils. Mrs. Epstein is both a teacher and a teacher's counselor. She lives in Kiryat-Ono , Israel , with her husband and two sons.

Naomi was awarded the TESOL Betty Azar Professional Development Travel Grant for practicing ESL / EFL teachers.

ETAI Lifetime Achievement Award 2010: DVORA BEN MEIR, devoted to improving English teaching in Israel



Dvora has been involved in teaching since she was a teenager – gathering young children and telling stories, running day camps and organizing children's birthday parties. She majored in education at Stern College and did her student teaching on the Lower East Side in New York, and upon receiving her substitute teacher's license began teaching on the West Side. Upon her aliyah to Israel in July, 1961, Dvora attended her first in-service training course at Bar Ilan University and began teaching Grade 9 in Ohel Shem High School in Ramat Gan in September of that year. It was quite a shock for her to be faced with 43 pupils in each class, all standing at attention when she entered the classroom. Dvora was lucky to be taken under the wings of the late Nechama Storier, who explained the Israeli system and introduced her to a group of veteran teachers who met monthly at the homes of Bianca Romano and Alan Marbe. This support group was certainly the harbinger of ETAI as it provided a venue for teachers to share ideas and learn from each other.

Dvora began to raise a family but continued teaching and participating in teachers' meetings. She introduced project work in Ohel Shem in 1963 and organized English song festivals there. Upon her return from her husband's sabbatical in the US in 1969, she began teaching in the Rogozin Comprehensive High School in Or Yehuda. This became a new testing ground for innovative ideas such as group work and oral presentations. She was noticed by English Inspectors Thea Reves and Nili Tagar and was chosen to participate in a course for teachers working with "disadvantaged" pupils, under the sponsorship of Prof. Frankenstein. This course provided her with theoretical and practical knowledge that enabled her to become a counselor for teachers teaching similar "disadvantaged" pupils. It encouraged her to organize the first English summer day camp for pupils from "disadvantaged" areas. In 1974, she was appointed part-time English inspector in the Central District, attempting to provide teacher training for over 150 teachers from Hod Hasharon to Michmoret three days a week. During this time, she continued teaching in Or Yehuda and learned to appreciate how motivation increased learning in her pupils. In 1975, she was approached by Ziona Kronfeld to work with her and the late Sheila Been at Educational Television. This experience enabled Dvora to develop both as a teacher trainer and a materials writer. Working with Ziona and Sheila provided opportunities to produce innovative materials, such as Jigsaw readings, listening comprehension cassettes, techniques using

video. Together with Sheila, Dvora was a member of the English Committee under the chair of Prof. Alice Shalvi, and helped found ETAI under the chair of Elite Olstein and Ephraim Weintraub. Dvora volunteered to establish ETAI branches, traveling all over the country to provide teacher training sessions. Together with Jean Vermel, Dvora helped organize the first International ETAI conference, bringing together teachers from all over Israel and guest speakers from the world of ESL/EFL. Dvora and Evy Ezra co-chaired the Second International ETAI conference, doing it without the help of a conference company and before the days of the Internet. Thanks to the selfless work of the committee, the conference was a huge success and brought famous linguists and materials developers from many countries in the world to Israel.

Dvora continued to participate in courses such as the Inspectors' Summer Courses organized by Raphael Gefen and the Center for Teaching Improvement program run by Dr. Ora Zohar, a British Council course for materials developers. These courses provided opportunities to implement new ideas in her work at Educational Television and at Bar Ilan University, where she was in charge of the Teacher Training program for English teachers and the chair of the English section of IMPROVE, run by the Center for Social Integration.

Since her retirement from IETV and Bar Ilan University, Dvora has held various free-lance positions as Pedagogic Editor for Eric Cohen Books, UPP, and English Adventure. She has worked as Pedagogic Manager at Edusoft, providing pedagogic guidance in blended-learning programs. She has also worked as editor at Time2Know, developing material for blended-learning programs in the US. For the past four years, Dvora has been volunteering at a youth center in Or Yehuda, providing individual tutoring for Ethiopian high school pupils. She has also been volunteering at Yad Sarah at Tel Hashomer Hospital.

Dvora still enjoys the challenges offered by the teaching profession and finds excitement and satisfaction in every aspect of teaching. Thanks to the strong ties with the community of English teaching professionals, Dvora has managed to find much fulfillment in her work. She wants to express her gratitude to her many mentors, pupils and students – and above all, to her family, for providing such a rewarding life.

Dvora will be receiving our 2010 Lifetime Achievement Award at the 6th International ETAI Conference this July. Congratulations, Dvora!

WRITERS, WRITERS & BACKBITERS

David L. Young (dlwhy04@yahoo.com)

“I would like you to write 150 words on...” is a statement that you have probably used more than once in the classroom. It is inevitably followed by a collective groan. This in turn is then followed on by excuses such as, “We don’t have time, teacher. We’ve got this huge history test on Wednesday” or “Is this instead of a book report on...?” etc. Therefore, it may not come as a complete surprise to your kids who hate written assignments to know that writers don’t like other writers. Writers may sit with other writers and sip tea together. They may chat and drink cocktails with them at literary meetings, and may even join each other for a beer at the local pub but, all in all, writers do not like other writers.

This is nothing new. Thousands of years ago when the ancient Greeks and Romans were running around in togas, it was recorded that Aristophanes described Euripides as “A cliché anthologist ...and maker of ragamuffin manikins.” Later writers were equally disparaging about the ancient Classic pen-pushers. Macaulay wrote about Socrates, “The more I read him, the less I wonder that they poisoned him.” The philosopher Alfred North Whitehead said about Aristotle that he had invented science but had destroyed philosophy. Will Cuppy, the American humorist and literary critic, was also less than charitable when referring to Aristotle. He said that he was

famous for knowing everything. He taught that the brain exists merely to cool the blood and is not involved in the process of thinking. This is true only of certain persons.”

Years later, in the Middle Ages, Dante and Chaucer were both mocked by their fellow-writers. Horace Walpole described the author of the *Inferno* as “a hyena that wrote in tombs” while W.H. Auden called Dante “a terrible prima donna.” Chaucer, often described as ‘the father of English poetry’ fared no better at the hands of Virginia Woolf. Damning him with faint praise, she maintained that

“He was a staunch churchman, but he laughed at priests. He was an able public servant and courtier, but his views upon sexual morality were extremely lax. He sympathized with poverty, but did nothing to improve the lot of the poor.”

Lord Byron’s opinion of Chaucer was much harsher:

“Notwithstanding the praises bestowed on him, I think him obscene and contemptible; he owes his celebrity merely to antiquity.”

And later, when William Shakespeare was “strutting and fretting his hour upon the stage,” his fellow writers were busy in dishing out and receiving the dirt. Ben Jonson wished that the Bard had “blotted a thousand lines” of his writing while the poet John Dryden wrote that Jonson was

“not only a professed imitator of Horace, but a learned plagiary of all others; you could track him everywhere in their snow.”

Some two hundred years later Tennyson wrote that reading Jonson’s plays was “like wading through glue.” Tennyson’s contemporary, William Hazlitt, was even less kind about Jonson, stating that his creative talent was “of a repulsive and unamiable kind.”

The eighteenth century was a great time for writers to lambaste each other.

The lexicographer Samuel Johnson wrote that the creator of Gulliver’s Travels, Jonathan Swift, had “a higher reputation than he deserves” and that the poet Thomas Gray was

“dull in company, dull in his closet, dull everywhere. He was dull in a new way, and that made many people think him great. He was a mechanical poet.”

Samuel Johnson also denigrated his contemporary Oliver Goldsmith saying, “It is amazing how little Goldsmith knows. He seldom comes where he is not more ignorant than anyone else.” Doctor Johnson was not the only writer who came down heavily on Goldsmith. Sir Joshua Reynolds maintained that his mind was “entirely unfurnished” and Horace Walpole declared that Goldsmith was “an inspired idiot.”

And did the great compiler of the classic *Dictionary of the English Language* get away with these barbs? Certainly not! Lord Pembroke wrote, “Dr. Johnson’s sayings would not appear so extraordinary, were it not for his bow-wow way.” Neither did Horace Walpole mince his words regarding the lexicographer and described the good doctor thus:

“With a lumber of learning... Johnson was an odious and mean character... his style ridiculously bombastic and vicious; and, in one word, with all the pedantry he had all the gigantic littleness of a country schoolmaster.”

Being a woman and a writer in the eighteenth century did not guarantee that other scribblers of the same sex would be gallant and leave you alone. One writer, Mary Russell Mitford, said about Jane Austen: “Mamma

says she was then the prettiest, silliest, most affected, husband-hunting butterfly she ever remembers.” And, one generation later, Ralph Waldo Emerson confessed,

“I am at a loss to understand why people hold Miss Austen’s novels at so high a rate, which seem to me vulgar in tone, sterile in artistic invention, imprisoned in their wretched conventions of English society, without genius, wit, or knowledge of the world.”

His fellow American, Mark Twain, in a two-pronged attack against Jane Austen and Edgar Allan Poe wrote, “To me, Poe’s prose is unreadable – like Jane Austen’s. No, there is a difference. I could read his prose on a salary, but not Jane’s.” Twain also wrote that the omission of one of Jane Austen’s books “would make a fairly good library out of a library that hadn’t a book in it.” Over a hundred years later, Vladimir Nabokov would be even more sweeping, and in a letter to Edmund Wilson wrote,

“I dislike Jane, and am prejudiced, in fact, against all women writers. They are in another class. Could never see anything in Pride and Prejudice.”

And, finally, regarding the greatest writer of them all, the Bard, the Swan of Avon, William Shakespeare himself, how did the writers of his day treat him? Were they prejudiced against him? You bet they were! Even at the beginning of his career Shakespeare had to suffer the slings and arrows of his contemporaries when the dying writer and pamphleteer, Robert Greene, warned the Bard’s companions that:

“there is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tyger’s hart wrapt in a Player’s hide supposes he is well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and being an absolute Johannes fac totum, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country.”

In a different age and in a different country Ralph Ellison, the American writer and critic, wrote, “We don’t all dig Shakespeare uniformly, or even Little Red

Riding Hood.” Tolstoy was even more aggressive and wrote, “The undisputed fame enjoyed by Shakespeare as a writer is like every other lie, a great evil.” Samuel Johnson, who we have seen was never shy about expressing his opinions, wrote that “Shakespeare never had six lines without fault.” J.M. Barrie of *Peter Pan* fame was certainly less harsh and wondered, “I don’t know if Bacon wrote the works of Shakespeare, but if he did not, he missed the opportunity of his life.”

However, perhaps the most vicious criticism of Shakespeare was published by George Bernard Shaw. He declared:

“With the single exception of Homer, there is no eminent writer, not even Sir Walter Scott, whom I can despise so entirely as I despise Shakespeare when I measure my mind against his.”

But Shaw could not get away with such comments so easily. In 1977, in a letter to The Guardian, John Osborne looked back in anger and wrote:

“Having recently seen “St Joan” in London and “Caesar and Cleopatra” in Sydney, it is clearer to me than ever that Shaw is the most fraudulent, inept writer of Victorian melodramas ever to gull a timid critic or fool a dull public. He writes like a Pakistani who had learned English when he was twelve years old in order to become a chartered accountant.”

So remember, if you (or your students) ever become famous writers, make sure you can defend yourself against the sharp pen-points, possibly poisoned by jealousy, of your fellow scribblers. And, in self-defence, be prepared to puncture a few of the inflated egos who will rise up against you and your writing.

David L. Young loves the English language and has been teaching it from junior school to university levels and adults since he made Aliya in 1968. Today he teaches at the Jerusalem Academy of Science & Arts. His fifth historical novel: “Marlowe: Soul’d to the Devil” is due out in the UK this July.

TEACHING ACADEMIC VOCABULARY: WHY, WHEN, AND HOW?

Sara Fine-Meltzer (fine@bgu.ac.il)

Approximately thirteen years ago, my colleague and friend, David Rosenstein, and I were faced with a growing and frustrating problem: our most advanced students were doing poorly on unseen texts that should have posed no major difficulty. It was true of students who had placed into the level as a result of the psychometric as well as of students who had started at the basic and

intermediate levels.

The interesting, and eventually compelling, explanation for their failure was given by our students themselves. As they put it, “This wouldn’t be so hard if we knew more words.” Obviously, we scoffed at the idea since the psychometric was designed to make sure that at least one of the components of the exam was testing vocabulary

acquisition. Equally obvious was the fact that we were wrong.

So, the “why” part of teaching academic vocabulary was clear. Students with more words found it easier to read. I would almost add a “duh”, were it not for the fact that for decades, the common wisdom would have us all believe that the lack of a working vocabulary could be somehow compensated for by “understanding in context”. It is heartening that the academic community now accepts that if 90% of the context is unclear, no understanding can take place.

How to teach vocabulary: a suggestion

In a series of experiments based on the accepted methods of teaching vocabulary, we started devising quizzes of vocabulary based on the articles in our books, vocabulary in context (we still thought this could work), etc. In short, this didn’t advance our cause very much.

At last, we returned to “the good old days” and to the dismay (and indeed scorn) of countless colleagues, we compiled a list of 500 words for Advanced 1 and another 500 for Advanced 2. The words were chosen according to a number of criteria:

- a. Frequency of appearance in all academic articles (however, therefore, thus, etc.)
- b. Similarity in sound or spelling to words already known (appalling-appealing; uninterested-disinterested)
- c. Well-established changed meanings in an academic context (application, to address, to furnish)
- d. “New” meanings for words already in the language (to construct)
- e. False cognates or expressions (rhetorical question)
- f. Words or expressions which our students found confusing (“all things being equal”)

It is important to note that the list changes and has undergone numerous transformations. The changes reflect the fact that words come into and fall out of fashion. In addition, when we see that a particular word is causing widespread difficulty, we put it on the list.

The words are given in groups of 50 with the Hebrew translation given by the teacher. Dictionary definitions are not allowed for a number of reasons, but mostly because the extant dictionaries either do not have enough words or they do not contain enough definitions. Even if they do, few students are capable of understanding (or even finding) the desired definition.

The students’ responsibility is cumulative. That is, students are required to learn 50 new words a week while retaining the previous ones. Quizzes are given

once a week on a total of 25 words taken from the whole assignment. Students are expected to give the Hebrew translation only and are given two minutes to complete the task. Except for students with learning disabilities, this seems to be more than enough time, and students who have studied the words generally manage in less than a minute and a half. At least 10% of the final grade is the average of 10 vocabulary quizzes.

Clearly, the fact that students do not have to stop at every other word means, after mastering the lists, that they can navigate an academic text more easily, with less sense of desperation and/or frustration. But there is another important reason for teaching vocabulary in this way and this falls into the category of language competence vis-à-vis language confidence. It turns out that a fairly large number of our students for whom the English language is anathema, suddenly discover that with vocabulary acquisition comes understanding and the feeling that they can finally begin to make sense of this exceedingly foreign language. Since the vast majority of humans can memorize, this becomes a “can-do” task. Those students who do not succeed are those who do not want to be bothered with what they see as tedious rote learning.

This brings us to the question of how best to learn. Encouraging greatest possible contact with the vocabulary is essential, and one extremely effective way to do that is with a partner. The process begins with creating “flash cards” with a word in English on one side of the card and the Hebrew translation on the other. With a partner, the words are seen, spoken, heard and can be written, thereby imprinting the brain any number of times. It is interesting to note, though not surprising, that students remember these words for years, or for as long as their studies or jobs have something to do with English.

Since these words appear in the texts we study, as teachers we stop at those words in class and give the students a chance to shout out the meaning. We also make an attempt to use them in the construction of examination questions. It is nothing short of a delight to see that students who were joined at the hip to their dictionaries on the first unseen of the semester, seem to be able to write the final exam of three hours with only a passing glance at that same dictionary.

Students should be encouraged NOT to use the list to study from because our eyes take in more information than we need. For instance, if I am trying to look at word three with its translation, it is almost impossible not to perceive the words immediately above and below with their translations. This causes unnecessary confusion and should be avoided as counterproductive to the whole process.

When to teach “academic” vocabulary

So far, the emphasis has been on the university setting. However, we are not a self-contained unit. Our students always come from somewhere, and if we (and they) are lucky, they will continue beyond their studies with us. It is, therefore, incumbent upon us to do some serious thinking about the “come from” aspect as well as preparing our students for their work on advanced degrees.

This brought me to the conclusion that if entering students already had a good vocabulary, they would do better on the psychometric and have a much easier time in dealing with the vast amounts of academic material they are responsible for. So when?

The answer I would venture to give is: as soon as children begin their study of English. Memorization of vocabulary ought to be an integral part of the whole learning process. First of all, they can do it. In fact, they can do it a lot better than we adults can. Does it matter that English is a second, third, or fourth language? Not much, it turns out, especially if the language is introduced before the age of 11 or 12.

How about the “academic” side of the language? I would answer that there is nothing wrong with letting even younger children know that a given word has a couple of meanings, one of the distinguishing features of the English language. Take, for example, the word “yet” (I haven’t eaten yet) but “Yet” at the beginning of a sentence means “However”. Nevertheless, I am not arguing here for small children to have a vast academic vocabulary, but rather that the habit of learning words by heart be an accepted and welcome part of the curriculum.

Not long ago, I happened to be helping some children prepare for a test in fifth grade. When they became stuck on the word “father”, I knew that we were in trouble. I stopped everything and made up a set of flash cards for the whole unit. They were instructed to learn them all and practice every day. It goes without saying that the words are now theirs.

Moving up to junior and senior high school, there are words and expressions that will become crucial to understanding academic texts, but positively mystify our students. Take, for example, the difference between a few and few or a little and little. Even after going over

this small but significant expression, there are still those students who insist that there is no difference. When these same students ignore the expressions in texts, the results in comprehension are predictably negative. We often ask questions based on the amount of research a particular study is based on. The difference between “a little research” and “little research” turns out to be the deciding factor in determining the originality of the author’s work. Certainly, the high school pupil can be taught to look for this “oddity” and learn it overtly.

I’d like to end with an anecdote. A few years ago, I was teaching summer school and had a number of teachers in my class. I encouraged them to use anyone available as a partner—husbands, girlfriends, children, etc. One woman whom I will call Ronit did exceedingly well with the vocabulary. About a month after the class ended, I received a call from her asking if I would speak to her son’s 8th grade teacher. It seems that Ronit’s son had consistently failing marks in English up to and including 7th grade and was already “famous” with the teaching staff of his school. Suddenly, Ronit’s son started getting 100s on every quiz and his teacher came to the conclusion that he had to be cheating. She couldn’t quite figure out how, but this seemed to be the only explanation. When Ronit was called to the school, she told the teacher that her son had been her partner in learning 500 vocabulary items during the summer and because he was a lot younger, he had apparently absorbed them like a sponge. At this point, the dumbfounded teacher began suspecting Ronit of telling less than the truth, so I was called in.

The very happy ending to this story is that years later Ronit’s son not only made it to university, but is today a graduate of a PhD program. Is it all due to vocabulary learning? Certainly not, but constructive “can-do” tasks such as ones tailored to fit the way most human brains function can go a long way in encouraging the learning process and more importantly, the learner.

Sara Fine-Meltzer is a veteran teacher of English as a Foreign Language at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. As a student of languages (Latin, French, Spanish, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, and now Russian), she has had on-hands experience using the methods she and her colleague have developed for the EFL program at the university. But her happiest “achievement” in life, she says, is the joy of her children and grandchildren.

L1 AND L2 IN THE EFL CLASSROOM: WHY AND WHEN?

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Introduction

Do you always speak to students in English? Do you ever use Hebrew, Arabic, Amharic, or Russian? What would happen if you did? These questions may rarely come up officially because most English lessons are geared toward using the target language as much as possible. Indeed, use of the L1 (native language or mother tongue) would appear to come at the expense of English. Indeed, many researchers claim that thinking in L2 (second or target language and foreign language) should be encouraged, and that the use of L1 in the process of L2 acquisition should be limited (Pedley, 1989; Cohen, 1995). There is no doubt that maximum exposure of students to the target language is the aim of the foreign language classroom.

However, it may not always be possible to use English exclusively in the classroom, especially when using higher order ideas. There is disagreement among researchers of L2 reading comprehension concerning the extent to which the L1 can or should be permitted in the EFL classroom. This question is important linguistically because language has been found to influence thought, attitude, and responses to questionnaires (Harzing, 2004; Richard and Toffoli, 2009). Thus, teachers of language are also teaching new ways of thinking. There is growing empirical evidence that the native language plays an important role (Corder, 1992) and facilitates second language acquisition (Anton and DiCamilla, 1998).

Teachers' use of L2 and L1

In Israel, a country of continuing immigration, a wide variety of mother tongues represents different groups of the population. Teachers cannot be expected to know all the languages used by the students. If use of English needed any further justification, we know that use of the L2 not only provides exposure to and reinforces the target language, but also gives all students equivalent linguistic stimulus and input/output.

Using the L2 exclusively, however, demands patience and trust on the part of teachers and students in the language learning process. There may be situations, especially at the beginners' level, that exclusive use of L2 may be frustrating, interfere with teacher-student communication, and reduce motivation to learn. Indeed, many researchers and teachers question the ethical as well as practical values of using L2 exclusively in the classroom.

When the teacher and students share a common language, L1 may have a facilitating function in the EFL classroom. A study by Zoabi (2009) of 35 Arab-Israeli

English teachers in 20-25 Arab elementary, junior and senior high schools in the north of Israel found that more than half of the teachers use L1 more than 50% of each English lesson. Most frequent uses of L1 reported were comparing grammar and vocabulary of both languages, and class management and discipline. Advantages listed by teachers were that the L1 facilitates teaching and student understanding, raises students' confidence and motivation, helps class management, and fosters teacher-student communication (Zoabi, 2009).

In another study, Shalabi (2009) observed three Arab teachers of EFL in three elementary schools in northern Israel. She lists seven functions of L1 that teachers use to avoid this frustration: giving instructions, evaluating comprehension, explaining, managing the classroom, giving feedback, discussing personal issues, and confirming students' answers.

In both studies, L1 was found to enhance language learning and classroom atmosphere.

Students' use of L2 and L1

Use of L2 in oral and written responses gives each student a fair and equal chance to demonstrate knowledge and mastery of the target language. This process is easier with students above beginner level than at more advanced levels, especially when writing in the target language.

This dilemma is often solved by using question types that elicit little need for writing. In most schools in Europe and other countries, including Israel, the most popular item types used to assess L2 reading comprehension are multiple-choice questions, true / false questions, open-ended questions and gap-filling tasks. Many researchers claim that students answering in L2 would be at a disadvantage (Laufer, 1978, 1983; Tan and Ling, 1979; Donin and Silva, 1993; Martinez and Godev, 1994; Wolff, 1993; Bouchard, 1996; Bastos and Kopschitz, 1996; Samson, 1998; Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Whereas some researchers have found negative effects of L2 production on the objective assessment of L2 reading comprehension, the switch to the mother tongue does not always result in higher grades (Bogdanov and Bensoussan, 2010).

Research on reading comprehension has indicated that L1 reading proficiency can both predict and facilitate successful L2 reading comprehension by transfer of strategies (Rufai and Maida, 1976; Cohen, 1986; Brisbois, 1992; Barkon and Avinor, 1995). Researchers believe that L1 reading ability can efficiently help with reading in

L2 only on condition that second language learners have adequate general second language proficiency (Nevo, 1989; Perkins, Brutten, and Polmann, 1989; Lee and Scharlert, 1997). Weak readers, apparently, would benefit from the L1 only if they have a minimal proficiency level in L2 (Richard and Toffoli, 2009). Since a minimal level of L2 is needed to take full advantage of skills acquired in L1, language proficiency is a factor that needs to be taken into account when testing complex reading skills. Results may indicate, for lower-level students, “not [that the] mother tongue is of aid, but rather ... [that] second language is a hindrance to comprehension ... until more automatic processing capabilities are developed in the second language” (Lidard, 1992). Thus language proficiency is a factor that needs to be taken into account when testing; students below advanced-intermediate level would probably not benefit from L1 transfer to L2 (Bogdanov and Bensoussan, 2010).

Indeed, many researchers and teachers question the ethical as well as practical values of using L2 to test L2 reading comprehension. They believe that the L2 questions interfere with assessing learners’ text comprehension inasmuch as the questions themselves constitute a text (Alderson, 2000: 176, 236). In fact, when a student gets a question wrong, the student may have misunderstood either the text, or the question, or both. Thus, a misunderstood question does not necessarily mean that the text has been misunderstood. With these inherent difficulties, asking a question in L2 could interfere with assessment.

There is another concern, often expressed by proponents of L1 use in an L2 reading comprehension test: many students tend to copy parts of the text which partially or even completely coincide with the expected answer, but still fail to demonstrate understanding / misunderstanding of the text (Laufer, 1983). L2 responses can be claimed “to underestimate and distort second language comprehension at least at intermediate and advanced proficiency levels” (Donin and Silva, 1993; Wolff, 1993). Consequently, L1 might be a more accurate indicator than L2 of reading comprehension in L2 (Laufer, 1978, 1983; Martinez and Godev, 1994; Bastos and Kopschitz, 1996; Swain and Lapkin, 2000). If so, it might be reasonable to accept and even require L1 written answers in tests evaluating L2 reading comprehension.

Moreover, students would not have to spend precious examination time searching for words and thinking of grammar. Answering in L1, students would not have to worry about failing to demonstrate the real extent of their reading comprehension.

Finally, teachers often complain that students’ lack

of control of the mechanics of L2 writing makes the assessment of student reading comprehension difficult (Alderson, 2000; Bouchard, 1996; Laufer, 1978, 1983). Indeed, the teacher may need to decipher the correctness of badly written or incomplete responses. To solve this problem, it is possible to demand minimal writing skills to assess comprehension (such as multiple-choice or true/false items), or else it is possible to ask for responses in the L1. A short translation exercise of five vocabulary items, for example, would quickly indicate students’ level of comprehension.

Students and teachers often advocate using L1 in written answers to L2 reading comprehension questions. Many students claim that they feel more confident answering open-ended questions in their L1 than in the L2. Some educational institutions in Israel and abroad accept and even require the use of L1 in constructed response tasks in L2 reading comprehension tests.

A study by Bogdanov and Bensoussan (2010) compared written answers in L1 (Hebrew) and L2 (English) in order to evaluate reading comprehension of texts in L2. The study was carried out on 46 advanced intermediate level undergraduate students enrolled in an intensive 50-hour English reading comprehension course at the University of Haifa. In two classes, each student read two texts in English and answered a set of open-ended questions, one in English and the other in Hebrew. It was found that answers in English (L2) and Hebrew (L1) tended to be similar, except for one class in which English answers received significantly higher scores than Hebrew answers. There was no empirical support for the hypothesis that written answers in L1 would receive higher scores than written answers in L2 on tests of L2 reading comprehension. Therefore, Bogdanov and Bensoussan (2010) suggested that in terms of accuracy of evaluation, the choice of the language for written answers (L1 or L2) is not statistically significant for test scores.

Since there are few research studies in which L1 responses were compared with L2 responses on equivalent tasks (Wolff, 1993), and the implications of these studies are still controversial, the choice of language for written answers can be a matter of individual discretion and pedagogical consideration. Practical implications are connected with decisions made by educational institutions, individual teachers or even students.

Classroom Implications

Which languages do I use with my remedial students who have failed the advanced reading course at least once? I use both L2 and Hebrew, which may be students’ L1, L2, or Ln.

English is used exclusively, both paper-and-pencil hard copy and on-line (HighLearn courses, CALL website, e-mails) in the following situations:

- all texts: teaching and testing materials
- written instructions (assignments, quizzes, examinations)
- student responses on homework assignments, class quizzes, and examinations
- HighLearn announcements, e-mails, and SMS messages

I use **Hebrew** for clarity in the following situations:

- explaining a point of grammar or a complex idea
- explaining differences between English and Hebrew
- enhancing classroom atmosphere, getting students' attention, for humor

I use **both languages** in the following situations:

- explaining test instructions
- writing comments and corrections on a student's paper
- giving feedback
- discussing personal issues
- confirming answers

I accept **Hebrew** from students in the following situations to enhance confidence:

- discussing personal issues
- asking questions and expressing ideas that they cannot express in English
- on short vocabulary translation exercises
- very rarely on tests and exercises of gap-filling tasks, open-ended questions, or summaries
- on e-mails, SMS messages

Flexibility in language use can establish trust between teachers and students, which in turn enhances motivation and language learning.

Note: For an in-depth discussion among teachers in South Eastern Europe and Israel entitled "Using L1 (mother tongue) in English Lessons" visit <http://www.seeta.eu/course/view.php?id=4>. More about SEETA in the Netsurfing section.

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HEBREW CORRECTNESS AND COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING IN THE CLASSROOM

Raphael Gefen (rayag@bezeqint.net)

In going through my papers, I discovered an ABC Chart that I sent to all teachers in primary schools in 1967, my first year as Chief Inspector for English Teaching. Every letter in English was accompanied by an illustration, with its Hebrew translation. And what did I discover? The letter C was illustrated by a cigarette (together with the Hebrew translation) and a bottle of Coca Cola (again with the Hebrew translation). ‘D’ was illustrated by a picture of a Dan bus, whereas ‘E’ was an Eskimo and not an Egged bus, ‘F’ by a football (written “פּוֹטְבָּול”), ‘N’ by the word in English and Hebrew ‘Nescafe’, and ‘V’ by ‘Vespa’. Hebrew purists today will probably also object to ‘H’ for ‘helicopter’, and advocates of political correctness will look askance at ‘I’ for ‘Indian’ (rather

than ‘Native American’) and ‘I’ with a boy (wearing a ‘kova tembel’) rather than a girl (or both).

Nobody complained then, although the chart was hung in every 5th grade class where English was being taught as an ‘experiment’ – the beginning age then being Grade 6.

I leave readers to ponder on changes in linguistic and cultural awareness since those days.

Raphael Gefen was Chief Inspector for English 1967 – 1992 and a teacher of Applied Linguistics and of English Teaching Methodology at Oranim Teachers’ College and at the Hebrew University.

HANDWRITING: WHAT'S NORMAL, WHAT'S NOT

Handwriting: What's Normal, What's Not

Good handwriting is an important skill for young children. Handwriting is a basic tool that children use in the classroom for expressing their ideas, creating stories, and test-taking. Handwriting, reading, and spelling skills reinforce each other. If your child is able to write letters easily and clearly, he can spend more time focusing on his message and forming interesting sentences.

Is my child's handwriting "normal?"

Here are some developmental milestones in writing:

Preschool: Writing first appears as scribbles drawn in a large circular motion. As your child attempts to write her own name, shapes that resemble letters begin to appear.

Pre-K and kindergarten: Your child may enjoy drawing and labeling objects, using invented spelling with no vowels ("bed" becomes "BD"). He will write in upper case letters – most of them correctly formed – and begin to string separate words together to express more complex thoughts

First grade: Fine motor skills are stronger and your child gains better control in writing her letterforms. She is learning the difference between upper case and lowercase letters. Invented spelling is still common. Writing is fun as your child gains confidence and "automaticity."

Second grade: Your child's handwriting may become smaller and neater. Your child is able to focus more on what he is writing than on the mechanics. Journal writing in class provides lots of practice for strengthening handwriting skills.

Third grade: Your child will begin to learn to write in cursive. Writing speed will slow down, and close attention to letter formation will increase. Some class assignments will be in cursive, providing practice with this new skill.

Poor handwriting and learning disabilities

Children who struggle with handwriting may be exhibiting signs of a learning disability called dysgraphia. Dysgraphia affects a child's ability to write with a pen, pencil, or crayon. It also affects other tasks that require fine motor skills, such as using scissors or buttoning a shirt. Dysgraphia often overlaps with other learning disabilities such as dyslexia and ADHD, but not always. If you suspect that your child has dysgraphia, consult with your school's special education staff to have your child tested.

Some common signs of dysgraphia:

- Awkward pencil grip and body position
- Illegible handwriting, letters of different sizes
- Unfinished words or sentences
- Inability to write for very long
- Avoidance of writing or drawing activities
- Difficulty organizing ideas on paper

If your child continues to struggle with handwriting through the later grades, consult with your child's teacher about the possibility of being tested for special education services.

For more information on handwriting and dysgraphia, visit: www.ReadingRockets.org/article/c37

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.

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

PLAYING WITH WORD SOUNDS: STRETCH AND SHORTEN

When beginning readers sound out words, they slowly say each sound in a word (c-a-t), and then say the sounds quickly together to “read” the word (cat). In reading, teachers often refer to this as blending. Blending (combining sounds) and segmenting (separating sounds) are phonological awareness skills that are necessary for learning to read.

Developing your child’s phonological awareness is an important part of developing your child as a reader. Many research studies indicate that kids who have weak phonological awareness also have weak reading skills.

There are lots of ways families can work to develop a child’s phonological skills. Most activities require no paper or pencil, which makes them perfect for those times when you’re stuck waiting for a table in a restaurant or at the doctor’s office. All you need is a little bit of silliness and a willingness to play with sounds.

Ask your child to listen as you stretch out sounds in words. Have your child say the word at regular speed. Start with short two-sound words, and work your way up to longer words. Try to keep the atmosphere fun and game like. If a certain word is too difficult, try using a word with fewer sounds. Once your child has gotten some practice saying the word at regular speed, switch roles. Have your child say a word slowly, stretching out each sound, and you guess what word is being said.

Here are some words to stretch and shorten:

2 sounds

at (æ-t)
up (ʌ-p)
it (i-t)
off (ɒ-f)

3 sounds

map (m-æ-p)
lip (l-i-p)
night (n-ai-t)
van (v-æ-n)

4 sounds

mint (m-i-n-t)
club (k-l-ʌ-b)
speak (s-p-i-k)
groan (g-r-əʊ-n)

5 sounds

stroke (s-t-r-əʊ-k)
stream (s-t-r-i-m)
frost (f-r-ɒ-s-t)
plant (p-l-ɑ-n-t)

For more information, read “Phonemic Activities for the Preschool or Elementary Classroom” visit: www.ReadingRockets.org/article/377

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THE USE OF L1 (ARABIC) AMONG TEACHERS AND PUPILS IN TEFL IN THREE ARAB SCHOOLS IN NORTHERN ISRAEL

Suhair Shalabi (*suhairshalabi@hotmail.com*)

Abstract

The use of L1 in three elementary schools by three Arab teachers teaching English as a foreign language and their pupils was investigated. The study focuses on the functions for which teachers and pupils use L1 in TEFL, the amount of L1 use, the reasons for using L1 and the effect of L1 use on classroom communication. The topic has long been a controversial issue among language teachers in different contexts and is significant because of its critical role in language acquisition.

Introduction

Throughout my studying and teaching experience, I was told why NOT to use L1 in my classrooms; I was not instructed in when and how to use L1 for the benefit of my pupils. I still remember the English inspector's comment on the feedback observation sheet: "no use of L1". He advised me to use it only "as the last possible resort". However, classroom circumstances created scenarios that did not leave much choice, especially when pupils did not understand my explanations, I had to resort to L1 more often than I had actually intended to initially.

The role of L1 in the TEFL classroom dramatically changes when you are working in a culturally homogeneous environment, with a common L1. Many of the pupils will not only have the same learning background and cultural experiences, but you will also find that they make the same pronunciation errors and struggle with the same grammatical items. This makes it easier to concentrate on these difficulties without neglecting other students. In a situation like this, you may be able to save a great deal of time by translating a word or two, or you may find yourself teaching a group of students at any level, whose previous English classes were given in L1. However, although perhaps no one questions the importance of using L1 in L2 teaching, not everyone agrees on how often teachers should use it in a class with students who have a common L1 (Dilin, et al., 2003).

There have always been conflicting views about whether to use the mother tongue of the pupils in the foreign language classroom. On the one hand, those who oppose the use of L1 claim that L1 interference and code switching practices are responsible for many of our pupils' mistakes while learning a foreign language. On the other hand, the struggle to avoid L1 at all costs can lead to bizarre behavior: One can end up

being a contortionist trying to explain the meaning of a language item where a simple translation would save time and anguish. Furthermore, learning a language is a difficult and often frustrating process for many learners, particularly at low levels. A one hundred-per-cent L2 direct method can be especially frustrating, while limited use of the L1 we could have a powerful, positive effect (Cole, 1998). Behan and Turnbull (1997) conclude that "L1 use can both support and enhance L2 development, functioning simultaneously as an effective tool for dealing with cognitively demanding content" (as cited in Swain and Lapkin, 2000, p. 252).

Findings

The overall findings of the research show that the three Arab teachers and their pupils are favorable to using L1 in the EFL lessons. Their argument is that it often seems to facilitate the target language comprehension, production, collaboration, task management and performance. They support Turnbull and McMillan's view that the use of L1 may lead to more comprehensible input and target language production (Turnbull and McMillan, 2008).

Conclusion

The major concern of this research has been to investigate the use of L1 by three Arab teachers teaching English as a foreign language in three elementary schools. Evidence was collected through questionnaires, observations, research logs and lesson transcriptions. Qualitative and quantitative analyses of the data has revealed that the attitude of both the teachers and their pupils is favorable towards using L1 in the EFL lessons. Their attitude is supported by the claim that the use of L1 could not be avoided due to pupils' lack of L2 vocabulary. The use of L1 facilitated communication in the target language and assisted teachers in gaining classroom control, and consequently, helped learners to be more involved in the lesson.

In regard to the amount of L1 use, there was not any significant difference between the three teachers (22%, 27%, 30%), nor among the pupils from the three classes (8.5%, 12%, 12.5%). However, a gap existed between the teachers and their pupils regarding the amount of L1 use; the teachers used double the amount of L1 than their pupils. This showed that teachers were those who controlled most of the classroom discourse. Most of their talk in L1 was mainly evident in explaining grammatical rules, new material and vocabulary.

The purposes for using L1 were similar among the three

teachers. They used L1 for giving instructions, checking comprehension, explanation, classroom management, feedback, personal issues and confirmation. The most dominant L1 function for the three teachers was classroom management and focusing on pupils' behavior. The reason behind using L1 for classroom management is that managerial language is not considered as part of the teaching material and teachers believe pupils will understand them better if they do it in Arabic. The aforementioned functions of using L1 also can be found in studies that have been conducted in other cultures, and could reflect a global perception of teachers regarding the use of L1 in EFL teaching.

One of the significant functions the three teachers used L1 for is explanation, mainly of vocabulary and grammar when pupils appeared to be having difficulty understanding. L1 can be used to provide a quick and accurate translation of an English word that might take several minutes for the teacher to explain through pantomime or simplified language, and even then there would be no guarantee that the explanation had been understood correctly. Teachers used L1 for explanation because they take into consideration the pupils' low L2 proficiency as beginner learners. However, in many cases the use of L1 can be replaced with more repetition, contextualization, and/or modification of L2. Yet teachers thought using L1 can be more effective than perhaps any of the modified L2 strategies, especially from the cognitive learning perspective, and in terms of time-cost effectiveness.

In a number of cases, teachers' use of L1 often contradicted what they said about using L1 to explain difficult material; often they used L1 to say something very simple that could easily have been said in English and understood by the pupils. It seems that that teachers tended to use L1 even when it was not necessary and not only when they wanted to help pupils to understand. This ineffective use of L1, as Edstrom (2006) and Turnbull (2001) claim may be nothing other than laziness to save time especially when teachers are tired or the pupils are agitated.

The pupils use L1 for clarification, spontaneous responses and expressing feelings and attitudes due to lack of vocabulary. They dedicated at least a third of their L1 use for spontaneous responses, i.e., following the teacher's use of L1 or responding to the teacher's demand to use L1. The pupils used the scaffolding of their L1 to help them overcome the difficulty in using the target language. However, there is a fear that pupils might become dependent on L1, and not even try to understand the meaning from the context and the

explanation, or express what they want to say within their limited command of L2.

Evidence also shows that there is a difference between the percentage of L1 use in the fourth grade (37.5%) in comparison with the sixth and the fifth (22.5% & 24%). This indicates that the young age of the learners or their beginning level was a factor in using L1 and shows the tendency of the teachers to decline the use of L1 gradually as the learners advance.

Although the three teachers support the idea that English should be the main language of communication in the EFL class and learners should be exposed as much as possible to the target language to permit acquisition, they still advocate using L1. They consider L1 as a normal mental and psychological process; a path they can take to provide a helpful and positive learning environment that allows learning a foreign language (Tsang, 1994) on the condition that it is used sensibly and appropriately. Teachers believe there does not seem to be any reasons to banish L1 simply for the sake of 'teaching English through English'; nor are there any reasons the use of it should be restricted to a certain percentage of language use as the needs of each class are unique (Artkinson, 1993). This perception, I believe following my study, makes the notion of "a judicious use of L1" (Turnbull, 2001; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002; Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Macaro, 2001) vague for the teachers. The teachers might sound reasonable in their defense of L1 use, yet, I think they overused it.

Practical Recommendations for Teachers

Generally, although teachers discuss factors beyond their control that demand the use of L1, there are many steps they can take to increase their own use of L2 and that of their pupils.

Based on this current study, I recommend the following: I could not find a study that specifies the recommended amount of L1 use in L2 classes, yet I would consider that dedicating a third of the L2 lesson for using L1 is overuse of L1. Since each class is a unique situation and the teacher is the one to decide the amount of L1/L2 to be used, s/he should study strategies for optimal L1/L2 use to avoid the possibility of using L1 for no particular reason. Teachers should invest effort in reflection while planning their L2 lessons, taking into consideration the L1 role and its interference as well as the significance of the L2 input.

Teachers use L1 to facilitate target language acquisition also for classroom management. Though teachers might justify the use of L1 for classroom management, I believe teachers should try using L2 first before deciding

that the pupils might misunderstand them. Classroom management is a type of input, so why deprive the pupils of genuine examples of L2! Teachers can begin with L2 and then resort to L1 if necessary.

The only function in language teaching that seems more effective in L1 is explanation of grammar and vocabulary. Probably the biggest potential advantage of having a knowledge of the learners' L1 is that it enables the teacher to contrast the language with L2 and to know which grammatical structures may pose specific difficulties and, possibly even more importantly, which structures are easy and need very little attention. The teacher with knowledge of L1 is also in a position to know potential problems with vocabulary items: false friends, words easily-confused and words with no equivalents. As a result, teachers will know precisely when to use L1. Teachers should avoid devoting entire L2 lessons to explanations of grammatical structures in L1. Grammar must be taught, but it is not the most important aspect of target language acquisition, especially when addressing young learners.

Teachers used translation to L1 in a much like TV captions because they thought it helped the pupils to better understand English. Though the teachers might be right, this use of L1 denies the pupils valuable L2 input especially when L1 is used unnecessarily. Teachers' practice must not contradict their stated principle of using L1, and end up using L1 ineffectively due to laziness or boredom. Instead of translation, teachers can provide more repetition, contextualization and modification of L2. If the learners we are addressing are beginners then teachers can translate to L1 in the beginning, and then gradually increase their use of L2.

To avoid pupils' dependence on L1 in their difficulty with L2, teachers must encourage pupils to use L2 by creating a rich L2-speaking environment. Moreover, since the pupils emulate their teacher's language, teachers should persist in using L2 him or herself most of the time, if s/he seeks L2 responses. Teachers should use English as much as possible in the classroom, give instructions in English, teach basic classroom metalanguage, require learners to use English when they ask questions, insist that they use English in group and pair work, etc. This is all extremely positive and undoubtedly leads to positive results.

Teachers believe that the main reason for the pupils' use of L1 is their lack of vocabulary. Therefore, teachers have to focus on teaching vocabulary as much as possible to insure that pupils retain and expand their active and passive vocabulary knowledge. Finally, teachers have to raise their pupils' awareness of the importance of using

L2 in their English lesson by establishing "ground rules" for the class at the beginning of the course, one of which may be "English will be used at all times!"

Contribution and Limitation of the Study

As this is a small scale study, its conclusions cannot be generalized to a larger population. However, as the aim of the study was to investigate processes of using L1 in TEFL among a particular cultural group of Arab teachers, the insights and the propositions made can be tested by others who wish to investigate classes of a similar or different cultural make-up. It would be interesting to have more comparative studies among different cultural groups and different age groups, secondary education for example, in order to shed more light on the processes of learning and acquiring a foreign language and L1 use.

This study might raise the awareness among English teachers and teacher trainers to the importance of classroom talk. It can motivate teachers to reflect on their classroom talk, their practices and assumptions and provide them with insights about their roles as EFL teachers. This can foster understanding of themselves and their pupils and thus enhance teaching and learning.

Personal note

Working on this project exposed me to real research. Having to deal with an abundance of information, confronting different theoretical views and being able to find my own research path was a big challenge. Even though my findings are not revolutionary, I am quite pleased to have been reinforced by existing research. I feel I have gained a lot of knowledge in a specific area which emerged out of my professional need to know. I have also learned a lot about research and its complexity. This knowledge is reflected in my daily work with my pupils. I have become more conscious when preparing my lessons. I am aware of the discourse in my lessons and I can analyze and talk about issues in a more confident and professional way. As for personal development, this journey is self-fulfillment and a great achievement for me.

This article was based on my expanded applied final project for the degree of Master in Education within the M.Ed programme in Oranim College, May, 2009.

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PORFOLIO AS A LEARNING AND TRAINING TOOL IN TEACHER EDUCATION: STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

Portfolio writing is a method for enhancing reflective learning and training among students in teacher education. Although portfolio, aimed at learning and training competencies, is popular in teacher education, few studies have been carried out to determine students' perceptions of portfolio as a learning and training tool. The current study is conducted to examine the students' opinions about using portfolio as a learning and training tool in teacher education. A questionnaire survey was conducted among 30 fourth year Arab students in teacher education to find out how they perceive the portfolio as a tool aimed at learning and professional development. A majority of the students show a positive attitude toward learning and training portfolios. However they think that it is stressful work to develop an effective and proper portfolio. The study also demonstrates that students delayed the work to the end of the course. The majority do not read the relevant books before writing the portfolio. The study also indicates that students believe that the portfolio is an efficient tool in assessing their achievements; however, they disagree that it should be the only tool in assessing their progress. In addition, the

research shows that students need adequate guidance from their teachers to develop a proper portfolio.

Key words: Portfolio, reflection, students' perception, professional and learning competencies, guidance and assessment.

Introduction

In the last decade, there have been numerous innovations in educational theory and practice. Education has moved from being a traditional teacher-centered process to one that is student-centered. Similarly in the area of assessment, there has been a shift away from assessing knowledge towards a more competency performance based assessment (Elgano, Jutti & Lee, 2005). There is now a wide variety of methods to choose from and portfolio based learning is an increasingly popular option among teachers and learners.

This study was conducted in an Arab College for Teacher Education in northern Israel. In this college, students are required to practice teaching in one school in the nearby region; and they are also required to manage a portfolio which should reflect their learning and teaching experiences. Many studies were carried out

about portfolios, but few were conducted to examine the students' perception of portfolios aimed at learning and training skills. The first section of the paper begins with a review of the related literature. The second part consists of the study; it includes the material and methods used in conducting the survey, the results and the findings are discussed. The conclusions end the article.

Review of Related Literature

Elgano, Jutti and Lee (2005: 512) define the portfolio as "a collection of written accounts of events and activities experienced by an individual, kept in a form of journal". They add that the portfolio is used not only as document of events but also as an effective learning tool.

Portfolio is defined in Webster Dictionary (1994: 908) as "a higher cover or flexible case for carrying loose papers, pictures, or pamphlets. The use of such case is to carry documents of a state".

Portfolio approaches to assessing literacy have been described in a wide variety of publications (Flood & Lapp, 1989; Lamme & Hysmith, 1991; Mathew, 1990; Valencia, 1990). Generally speaking, a literacy portfolio is a systematic collection of a variety of teacher observations and student products over time that reflects a student's development status and progress made in literacy.

Paulson, Paulson and Meyer (1991) state that the portfolio is a purposeful collection of a student's work that demonstrates the student's effort, progress, and achievements in selected areas of the curriculum. It includes a collection of the student's best work, and other student-selected samples of learning experiences. Portfolios may consist of a wide variety of materials such as teacher's notes, student's self-reflections, reading-logs, sample journal pages, written summaries, audiotapes of oral readings, videotapes of group projects and so forth (Valencia, 1990).

The process of creating a portfolio generates opportunities for self-reflection in which the individuals set goals and direct their learning strategies. Fisher and King (1995) considered the portfolio approach as being conducive to self-directed learning. Thus students' confidence and motivation are enhanced as they reflect upon their improvements (Khalil & Lazarowitz, 2001).

Research has been conducted on different aspects of portfolios and in different areas of learning and teaching. In a teacher education program, studies by Wade and Yarbrough (1996) showed that the process of constructing a portfolio prompted reflective thinking in many students. They concluded that portfolios were potentially valuable tools in a teacher education program

with the aim of developing reflective thinking.

Portfolios in Higher Education

In their article "Portfolio in Higher Education", Meeus, Petegman and Looy (2006) distinguished between two kinds of portfolios: portfolios aimed at profession-specific competencies and portfolios aimed at learning competencies. They favor the latter since it has a genuine value in higher education if we want graduates to continue to learn on a life long basis. They also argued that "in higher education portfolios aimed at a profession-specific competencies yield a limited added value because they only provide supplementary information compared to other and sometimes better tools" (p134).

Bird (1990) discusses the portfolios in higher education and concludes that portfolios are not neutral tools. They are developed from a specific educational vision and he also added that the aim of using portfolios in higher education was the application of alternative evaluation methods.

Seldin (1997) reported three kinds of portfolios in academy: a course portfolio, a professional portfolio and the teaching portfolio. Moreover, he provided three characteristics of effective portfolios: structured, representative and selective. Portfolios may consist of details of learning objectives, learning resources and strategies and how the learning might be accomplished and assessed. A portfolio is, therefore, a medium of communication, when labeled a learning portfolio. It is a container of documentation that provides evidence of the knowledge, skills and disposition of a lecturer or a group of learners (Bird, as cited in Carroll, Potthoff & Huber, 1996). For students in teacher education, a portfolio is a creation that emerges from their need to think about what they are doing while they are doing it in order to become effective teachers. Such reflective self-evaluation shows itself in the demonstration of their attitudes, behaviors, achievements and improvements (Van Sickle, Bogan, Kamen & Butcher, 2005). However, students' portfolios in this setting have another dimension. They can almost tell as much about the teacher educator and the teaching as well as the material taught.

Pitts, Coles and Thomas (1999) stated that portfolios should consist of paper copies of items such as written reflections, schedules and read material. They also argued that portfolios should:

- Be able to demonstrate that reflective learning had occurred.
- Be able to communicate interest in learning and to identify learning needs.
- Demonstrate knowledge of effective teaching

behaviors.

- Be able to emphasize the learners' perspective.
- Demonstrate knowledge of educational resources.
- Reflect on progress made and plans for future learning.

They, and others, also added that portfolios in education should be designed to promote the following goals:

- Enhance self-directed learning among students and promote habits that foster the long learning (Meeus et al., 2005).
- Encourage reflection in the students own level of competence and educational needs.
- Allow the student more flexibility and creativity to demonstrate the achievement of knowledge, skills and attitudes (Khalil, 2007).

Despite the popularity of portfolio-based learning among teacher educators, there remain questions regarding students' opinions of learning portfolios and their effects on their education. Therefore, this study aims at investigating the students' perspectives of the learning and training portfolio.

The Study

The study was conducted with fourth year students in English Department in Sakhnin Academic College for Teacher Education. The College is located in an Arab town in the Galilee, Northern Israel. There are four departments in the College. The department of English graduates almost 40 students annually. All the students are from the Arab sector in the north, and all of them are females between the ages of 20-30. They study for four years and are then awarded a B.Ed. and become professional teachers. During the first three years, the students are required to practice teaching at one of the nearby intermediate schools and a supervisor from the college follows them in their practicum program each year. The department requires students to construct a learning portfolio each year. The portfolio is worth 20% of the overall assessment in the practicum course. This is done as the "call to prepare teacher reflective about their practice is a dominant theme in recent teacher education literature" (Borko, Michalec, Timmons & Siddle, 1997: 347).

The pre-service students are given a set of core learning outcomes and they are required to accumulate evidence of their learning and training in their portfolio each year. The students can consult their supervisor during the year before submitting the portfolio to him at the end of the academic year. The portfolio contains a series of observations, lesson plans, and diaries including reflections, report about the host school, theoretical

material and reports about their weekly activities at the host school. The students' reports must be developed over time as part of the ongoing classroom teaching and management in which they are involved. Each report should include a set of learning issues which the students need to identify, and which in their opinion leads to better understanding of classroom and pupils' problems. The learning issues will include the students' reflections on every teaching or learning activity. They are required to reflect on the entire portfolio in a separate section after they finish writing it.

Materials and Methods

After reading the related literature, and after consulting some professional colleagues in the field from the same college, a questionnaire consisting of 24 statements was designed to examine the students' opinion about the portfolio as a learning tool and to investigate the students' experience of creating portfolios.

The subjects study in the department of English. They are fourth year students and have written three portfolios which were assessed by three different supervisors. The students were given an information sheet with details about this survey and were asked to participate in the study. They all consented to participate in the research and completed the questionnaire anonymously. For each of the 24 statements, the students had to rate their agreement or disagreement on a 4 point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The statements in the questionnaire were chosen to provide feedback on six themes:

1. How do students accept the portfolio as assessment tool?
2. What is their opinion about learning portfolio?
3. What should the portfolio focus on, learning or professional skills?
4. What is the importance of guidance in writing a portfolio?
5. When should they manage the portfolio?
6. How important is reflective writing?

The students' ratings were analyzed to determine the overall view of the students on the different aspects of portfolio writing.

Results

Thirty students completed and returned the questionnaire.

The percentage agreement (strongly agree and agree) and the percentage disagreement (strongly disagree and disagree) for each question are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
(Scale:1 = strongly agree, 2, agree, 3, strongly disagree, 4, disagree, n=30)

No.	Statement	Agree / Strongly Agree		Disagree / Strongly Disagree	
		No.	%	No.	%
1	I enjoy writing the portfolio	22	73.3	8	26.7
2	The portfolio is a tool to promote reflection among students	28	93.3	2	6.7
3	I can appreciate that my written communication has improved	23	76.6	7	23.4
4	The portfolio helps me in self-directed learning, as I can analyze problems on my own	25	83.3	5	16.7
5	Writing a portfolio is a stressful process	22	73.3	8	26.7
6	The portfolio is a container of documentation that provides evidence of knowledge, growth.	27	90	3	10
7	By writing a portfolio, the students are preparing themselves for change	23	76.6	7	23.4
8	The portfolio gives a picture of my individual experience in a learning situation	25	83.3	5	16.7
9	Assigning a portfolio advisor helps me in writing my portfolio	28	93.3	2	6.7
10	The portfolio helps me in assessing my professional and personal development	26	86.7	4	13.3
11	The portfolio encourages self-reflection	27	90	3	10
12	Writing the portfolio has helped me to recognize my strengths and weaknesses	26	86.7	4	13.3
13	The portfolio should be structured, representative and selective	28	93.3	3	6.7
14	Periodical feedback from the teacher is very important for writing an effective portfolio	30	100	0	0
15	I usually update my portfolio on regular basis	15	50	15	50
16	Having adequate guidance from the department is important for writing the portfolio	28	93.3	2	6.7
17	The portfolio should be a description of the students' personal literacy development	22	73.3	8	26.7
18	I usually read the relevant chapters in books before I write the portfolio	13	43.3	17	56.7
19	The portfolio has helped me to monitor the learning goals	26	86.7	4	13.3
20	Portfolio should be a part of every educational program	22	73.3	8	26.7
21	A portfolio should focus on the learning skills	25	83.3	5	16.7
22	The portfolio is a good tool for assessing the students competencies	24	80	6	20
23	The portfolio reflects the students' ability in learning	26	86.7	4	13.3
24	The portfolio should be the only tool to evaluate the student's performance in this course	10	33.3	20	66.7

Table 1 shows that the students perceived that portfolio is a good tool for assessing students' achievement and competencies, but it should **not** be the **sole** tool to assess them.

They also enjoyed writing their portfolios although they perceive it as a stressful process. Moreover, they believe that portfolios should aim at both professional and learning competencies. Concerning the importance of the teachers' guidance during writing the portfolio, a higher percentage of the students (95.5%) think that it is very important for writing an effective portfolio. The students also perceive that the portfolio should be structured, representative and selective. Finally, the majority of the students who participated in this research agree that the portfolio is an efficient tool in promoting and facilitating their reflection. The high percentage of the students' agreement verifies that students generally show a positive attitude towards the portfolio as a learning tool, and they even agree that it should be part of every educational program.

Findings and Discussion

The results are discussed in this section under headings of the six themes identified for this research. Table 1 shows the percentage of the agreement and the disagreements for each statement of the 24 that were used in the questionnaire. The questions were then regrouped under the headings of the six themes and were represented in six figures, each figure represents one theme.

Figure 1: The Portfolio as an Assessment Tool

Statements 22, 23 and 24 in Table 1 relate to whether or not the students think that the portfolio is a good tool for assessing their achievements or not. The majority of students (84%) agree that the portfolio is an efficient tool for assessing their skills; and that it also reflects their learning ability. However, most students (66.7%) do not think that a portfolio should be the only tool for assessing their achievements. They feel that a portfolio should be an additional tool used to determine their final mark, as demonstrated in figure one.

Figure 1: The Portfolio as an Assessment Tool

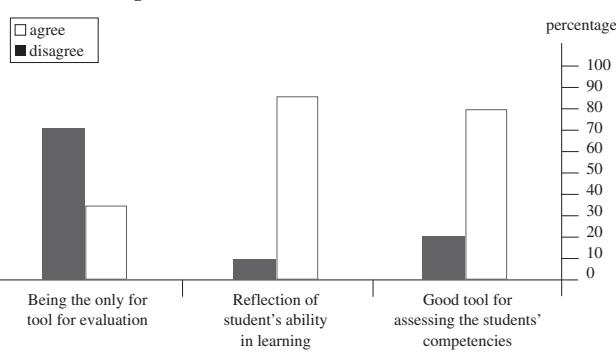


Figure 2: Students' Opinions about the Portfolio

Statements 1, 5 and 20 in Table 1 were designed to discover the students' opinions about learning portfolios. 73.3% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that writing the portfolio is an enjoyable process. Moreover, the same percentage believed that portfolio should be a part of every educational program. However, the majority of the students think that writing the portfolio is a stressful process. This is, we think, due to the workload for other courses in the college. These findings are similar to the findings of Elgano, Jutti and Lee (2005). Their results show that the students perceived that developing a proper portfolio is stressful and time consuming.

Figure 2: The Student's Satisfaction

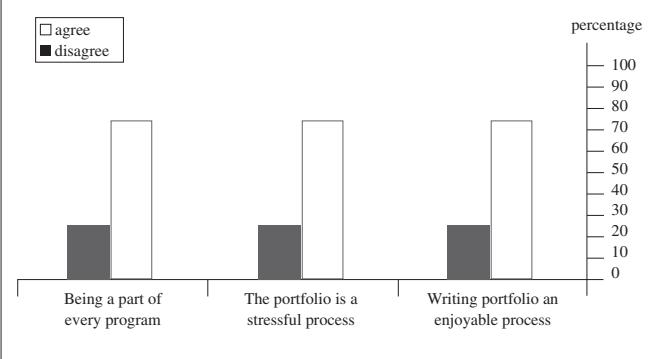


Figure 3: The Competences the Portfolio Should Focus

Items 3, 17, 19 in Table 1 investigate if the respondents perceived that the portfolio should be aimed at learning competences. Statements 4, 8 and 10 check whether or not the students agree that the portfolio should be aimed at professional competencies. Finally questions 6, 7 and 21 in Table 1 were used to obtain the students' feedback in relation to acceptance of a portfolio as aiming at both learning and professional competencies. The majority of the participants (83.3%) agreed that the portfolio should be aimed at both learning and professional competencies. These results contradict the findings of Meeus, Petegman and Looy (2006) who reported that the portfolio in higher education should aim at learning competences.

Figure 3: What Competencies the Portfolio should Focus On

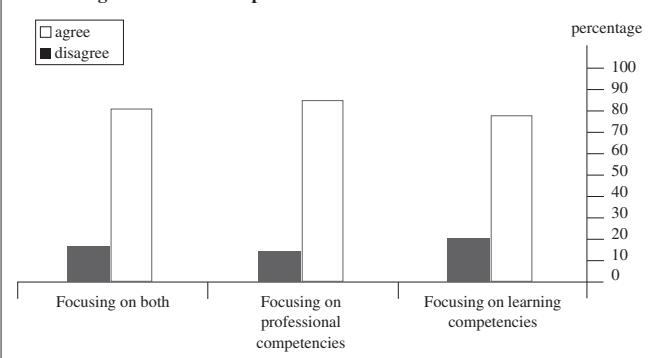


Figure 4: The Importance of Teachers' Guidance for Writing an Effective Portfolio

Statements 9, 14 and 16 in Table 1 were used to collect students' opinion about the usefulness of having guidance from the department for writing an effective and efficient portfolio. The majority of the participants (95.5%) agreed that having adequate guidance and periodical feedback from the teacher is important in writing an effective portfolio. They think that the department should assign a supervisor to help and guide them in their writing process during the academic year.

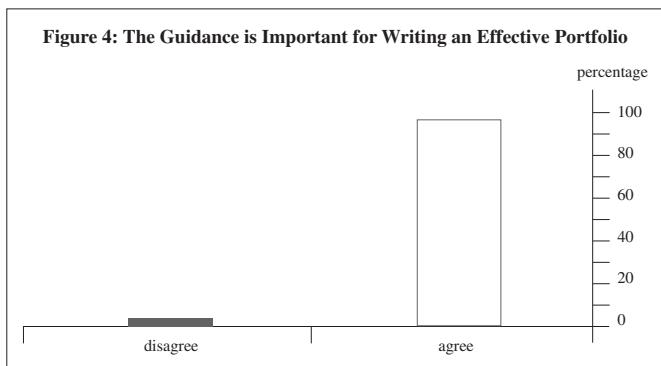


Figure 5: Managing the Portfolio

Figure 5, which present the students' response to statements 9, 14 and 16 in Table 1, shows that the majority of the students (93.3%) agreed that learning portfolios should have a specific design. This is, we believe, can facilitate and enhance their writing. However, 50% of the respondents reported that they do not update their portfolio on regular basis. They usually delay their writing to the end of the course. This, in our opinion, affects the effectiveness and the efficiency of the portfolio. Another important result is that only 56.6% of the participants read the relevant books before they write the portfolio.

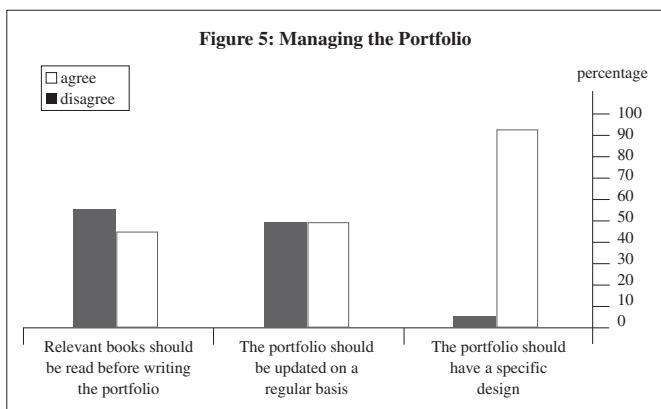
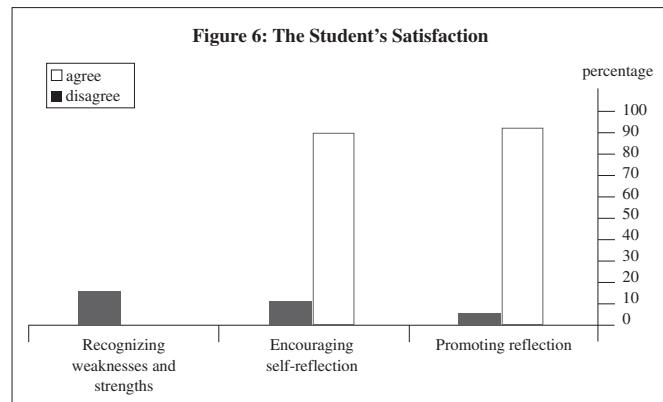


Figure 6: The Portfolio as a Reflection Tool

Finally, Figure 6, which presents statements 2, 11 and 12 in Table 1, shows that the majority of the students (93.3%) agreed or strongly agreed that the portfolio promotes their reflection, and 90% perceive that writing a learning portfolio enhances their self reflection. 86.7%

of the respondents agreed that writing portfolio stimulates their recognition about their strengths and weaknesses in learning and dealing with problematic situations.

The ability to reflect on one's own action is an important skill for the teacher and student. This skill is difficult to teach by using instructional techniques. The portfolio can enhance the students' reflection on their actions both when they teach and when they learn.



Conclusion and recommendation

The findings of this research show that writing a learning portfolio in a higher education program is a useful learning tool. However, portfolio writing is perceived to be stressful because the students delay their work to the very end of the course. The study demonstrates that students perceived that the portfolio should aim at both learning and training competencies. The students also believe that in order to write effective portfolios, they should have guidance from their teachers. This is due to the fact that adequate guidance enhances and facilitates their writing. Another important conclusion is that students think that a portfolio is an efficient tool for assessing their achievements; however, they believe that it should be an additional tool for assessing them but not the only tool. The study shows that the students perceived that the portfolio enhances their reflection on their learning and their actions. Finally, the current study demonstrates that students have a positive attitude towards portfolios. However, it has some limitations: first, the population is limited ($n=30$). Second, the participants were of one gender, female. This is due to the fact that all students in Department of English in Sakhnin College are females. Third, the study was conducted among students from the same college who were given many lectures emphasizing the importance of writing a portfolio in teacher education. Finally, the college is newly established, and the management is ready to adopt any educational idea to enhance and promote their practicum program. A further study can be conducted in the future with larger population from both genders and from different colleges.

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A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF WH QUESTIONS ACCORDING TO BLOOM'S TAXONOMY IN THE READING COMPREHENSION TEXTBOOK "RESULTS FOR FOUR POINTS"

Tareq Murad (tarenal22@hotmail.com)

Introduction

In 2000 a new curriculum for English instruction was introduced in Israel. The curriculum focuses on four domains: social interaction, access to information, presentation, and appreciation of literature, culture and language. The authors of the textbooks for English felt that new textbooks should be written according to the new English curriculum or that old textbooks should be modified according to the new curriculum.

As a result, many books were written for all levels from the third to the twelfth grades. Among these books is a textbook entitled *Results for Four Points*. The reasons behind the choice of this textbook for this research is be discussed in the section entitled 'Research Tools'.

The goal of this new curriculum is to set standards for the aforementioned four domains of English language learning. The researcher sees that one of the main goals of this curriculum is to develop students' thinking to enable them to become responsible and creative learners, and use the English language more effectively.

With the new curriculum, the teacher's role became that of a facilitator who creates opportunities for students to learn the language in a challenging manner. In order to lead the students towards a situation in which they can know, comprehend, apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the learning material, teachers are aided by textbooks. Therefore, it is important to consider the textbook used..

According to Torrance (1962), students' thinking processes are essential for mental health, high achievements, and professional success in life. Marksberry (1963) asserts that the curriculum must not only provide students with knowledge, but also with thinking skills and correct thinking methods. It is true that teachers teach students knowledge, but together with the knowledge, teachers must also teach the students how to think. This is accomplished by utilizing all levels of questions in the cognitive domain described in Bloom's taxonomy.

Teachers must teach students how to use higher order thinking processes in their thinking. Therefore, teachers can assume that textbooks that have the objective of helping their students must also have these same objectives. The researcher therefore finds it fit to analyze the book *Results for Four Points* and see how much

it contributes to the development of area of thinking among students, and to what extent it leads them from a situation of being students who merely memorize material to being students with an ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate.

Bloom's (1956) taxonomy, which will be used in this study to analyze the questions in the textbook *Results*, is still commonly used in education. Bloom includes six levels for examining the goals of the cognitive domain among students: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Bloom's taxonomy is described as having the following characteristics:

Educational: Distinguishing between the groups of objectives that teachers use for writing curricula, study programs and lesson plans.

Logical: The levels are clearly and logically defined.

Psychological: In accordance with psychological phenomenon.

Pyramidal: Ranging from the simple to complex with each level resting upon the preceding one.

Continuous: Each objective leads to the one following it.

Comprehensive: Each behavioral objective can be categorized according to the taxonomy.

Bloom, Englehart, Hill and Krathwohl (1956) define the six levels of the cognitive domain in Bloom's taxonomy as follows:

Knowledge:

Learner action: Learner content in the exact form that it was presented, memorization of definitions, formulas, or procedures are examples of knowledge level functioning.

Question cues: List, define, label, identify and name.

Example: Define compound interest.

Comprehension:

Learner action: Restate material in their own words, or can recognize previously unseen examples of a context.

Question cues: Describe, associate, categorize and summarize.

Example: Categorize the cases of compound interest versus simple interest.

Application:

Learner content: Apply rules to the problem, without being given the rule or formula for solving the problem.

Question cues: Apply, calculate, illustrate and solve

Example: If interest of \$100 is compounded daily for 14 months at 10 %, calculate the total amount of interest earned.

Analysis:

Learner action: Break complex concepts or situations down into their component parts and analyze how the parts are related to one another.

Question cues: Analyze, compare, separate, order and explain.

Example: Using the previous example, if interest were compounded monthly instead of daily, what would the difference in interest be?

Synthesis:

Learner action: Rearrange component parts to form a new whole.

Question cues: Combine, modify, rearrange, and “what if”.

Example: What interest rate is required for \$100 to grow to \$125 in six months, compounding daily?

Evaluation:

Learner action: Evaluate or make judgements on the worth of a concept, object, etc., for a purpose.

Question cues: Assess, decide, grade, recommend, explain and judge.

Example: Given a list of three potential investments, including their interest rates, length of investment, and compounding schedule, select the best option, and defend your decision.

The researcher believes that it is necessary to analyze questions in textbooks in order to assess the worth of textbooks in the educational system and in developing students' thinking in particular. Content analysis is a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding (Berelson, 1952; Krippendorff, 1980). It permits inferences to be made which can then be corroborated using other methods of data collection (Krippendorff, 1980). Analysis of questions is also an extremely important process that lets us know the merits and drawback points of questions, and to what extent they contribute to developing students' thinking. The analysis itself offers us the possibility of choosing which questions to save, change, or modify. Analysis also constitutes an indication of the level of the textbook -

whether or not the book leads students towards levels that demand higher thinking such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Research Problem

A large number of teachers adhere to the textbook and attempt to teach it. This has led the researcher to randomly choose one of the textbooks, and to examine the extent to which the book actually helps the teacher develop students' higher thinking, and to what degree it encourages students to use the different levels of mental processes for developing critical thinking skills. The method by which this will be determined will be an examination of the quantity of questions relating to reading comprehension passages in the book, and determining their cognitive level according to Bloom's taxonomy. This analysis will clarify whether the questions in the book truly help develop higher thinking, or are merely questions that call for a lower level of thinking.

The Research Question

What are the cognitive levels of the Wh-questions in the reading comprehension passages in the textbook Results and their frequency?

Significance of this study

Evaluation is universally accepted as an integral part of teaching and learning. It is one of the basic components of any curriculum and plays a pivotal role in determining what a learner learns (Candlin and Edilhoff, 1982). Evaluation also plays a central role in deciding what teachers teach and how they teach (Reardon, 1994). Moreover, it is widely acknowledged as a powerful means of improving the quality of education (Barens, 2000). The importance of this study stems from the difference in results and recommendations of previous studies that dealt with analysis of questions in textbooks including Alcala, 1971; Black, 1980; Asfur, 1988; Roberson, 1988; Elsudi, 1998; Hiyagineh, 1998. The picture regarding the type and level of questions in textbooks for teaching English in the Israel is unclear. In addition, this study might be the first of its kind to analyze a textbook written according to the new curriculum for teaching English in Israel. Presumably it will also, together with other studies, help the population of teachers learn which type and level of questions are emphasized in the book *Results* and where this leads the students from the standpoint of developing thinking.

Limitation of the study

This study is limited to the following:

The textbook *Results*, which is intended for teaching Students whose level of proficiency and achievement is intermediate (4 pointers); all the WH-questions in the

reading comprehension passages of the textbook *Results*; Bloom's taxonomy for analyzing WH-questions from the textbook *Results* according to cognitive domain.

Definition of related terms

Results for Four Points is a course of study for High School students at a proficiency level. It was published in Israel in 2006 by Eric Cohen Books Ltd.

WH-questions, also known as constituent questions or information questions, begin with a WH-word such as who, what, which, where, when, and why, and end with a question mark.

The six levels of the cognitive domain according to Bloom's Taxonomy of knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. The operational definition of this taxonomy has been mentioned above.

Review of related literature

Benjamin Bloom and colleagues (1956) created the original taxonomy of cognitive domains for categorizing level of abstraction of questions that commonly occur in educational settings. That work has been revised to help teachers understand and implement a standard-based curriculum (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001). For the instructional designer, the taxonomy provides a comprehensive set of classifications for learner cognitive processes that are included in instructional objectives.

Classifying instructional objectives using this taxonomy helps to determine the level of an instructional unit or lesson.

Both Skierso (1991) and Chall and Conard (1991) utilize Bloom's Taxonomy of the cognitive domain to assess the processes and skills textbooks require learners to perform. The rating of a textbook will directly reflect the level of skill it demands.

Chall and Conard have adapted Bloom's Taxonomy to create a "Question Complexity Rating Scale". They use this to evaluate individual questions in order to analyze the difficulty of questions and to display the range of cognitive skills needed by the students to complete textbook activities. These concerns highlight the increasing significance that professionals place on the process of learning and the recognition that focusing solely on outcomes often does not address all the second language learner's needs.

Black (1980) analyzed science instruction questions in Nigeria according to Bloom's taxonomy. The research population included 207 schools from which he chose a random sample of 48 schools. He collected one modern test from each school for analysis. The analysis was

performed by the researcher and by two other experts. The percentage of agreement among the experts was 89%. The results revealed that the knowledge level received the highest percentage, followed by the comprehension level, and the application level respectively.

Asfur (1988) analyzed history teachers' questions in junior high schools in Jordan according to the cognitive level of Bloom's taxonomy. Asfur analyzed the questions posed during 90 history lessons given by a sample of 45 history teachers. He received the following results: 83% of the questions were knowledge questions, 11.3% were comprehension questions, while 5.3% were application, analysis, and synthesis questions. There were no evaluation questions.

Roberson (1988) conducted a research in the United States on teachers' questions in 7th grade social studies classes. The research sample included 85 students and four teachers. He used observation and videotaping to record his findings. When he analyzed the observations and videos he found that teachers emphasized knowledge questions.

Hiyagineh (1998) analyzed examination questions that were written by Arabic language teachers in Jordanian high schools. The questions were analyzed according to the six levels of cognitive domain in Bloom's taxonomy. The sample included 9769 questions from 104 male and female teachers. After analyzing the questions according to the guide of levels that he prepared, he received the following results: teachers used all levels of questions in Bloom's scale, but to different degrees. For example, the knowledge level questions were 44.20%, Comprehension level were 32.40%, application questions were 13.10%, analysis questions were 4.60%, and synthesis questions were 2%, but evaluation questions were only 0.7%. This implies that teachers used all levels of questions, but need to pay more attention to questions that demand higher thinking. He therefore recommends that teachers undergo a training program to learn to write these types of questions.

Methodology and procedures

Research instrument

The researcher prepared a guide for the levels of questions based on the cognitive domain in Bloom's taxonomy. This guide included a description of the level of each question together with its criteria. This preparation ended in a consultation with experts in the field who hold a PhD and who are experts in measurement and evaluation.

The tool has been designed to allow the researcher and a second analyst to calculate the frequencies of each level of question in the textbook *Results for Four Points*.

The unit of analysis

The researcher chose the reading comprehension questions as the unit for analysis for this research. The question is defined as a WH-question – in other words – a question beginning with a WH-word and ending with a question mark.

Choosing the grade and the book

The eleventh grade uses text- books for English instruction, all of which are of a proficiency level. The researcher chose the eleventh grade because the students are preparing for the matriculation exam (Bagrut). Students in this grade must be exposed to all levels of questions in the cognitive domain in order to develop their thinking before they complete the Bagrut. In order to attain this type of thinking, students must have practiced all six levels of questions.

Validity of the instrument

The researcher established the validity of the research instrument by presenting it to a jury of experts in the field. The researcher asked the jury to examine the definitions

of the levels according to the skills and behaviors shown for each level. After examining the instrument, the jury reported that it was valid for the purposes of this research.

Reliability of the instrument

Inter-rater reliability: Establishing the inter-rater reliability was done in two major stages:

The First Stage: In order to establish the reliability of the research tool the researcher was helped by a second analyst.

The researcher then chose a random sample of 40 questions from the questions in the textbook. The sample was analyzed by the researcher and the second analyst and the frequency of agreement and disagreement between them was then calculated. In this way the researcher examined the consistency coefficient between the second analyst and himself. There were 38 questions that were agreed upon and 2 which were not agreed upon. The researcher used Holsti's (1969) equation to calculate the reliability coefficient:

$$\text{Consistency Ratio} = \frac{\text{No. of Coincident answers}}{\text{No. of coincident answers} + \text{No. of different answers}} \times 100$$

$$\text{Consistency Ratio} = \frac{38}{38 + 2} \times 100$$

$$\text{Consistency Ratio} = \frac{38}{40} \times 100 = 95\%$$

The results show that the research tool is reliable and can be used to analyze all 124 questions.

The second stage: In order to establish reliability for

the analysis, the researcher computed the agreement coefficient between the findings of the two analyses (the researcher and the other analyst): It is established as follows:

$$\text{Percent of Agreement} = \frac{\text{No. of Coincident answers}}{\text{No. of coincident answers} + \text{NO. of different answers}} \times 100$$

$$\text{Percent of Agreement} = \frac{124}{124 + 13} \times 100$$

$$\text{Percent of Agreement} = \frac{124}{137} \times 100 = 90.51\%$$

$$\text{Agreement Coefficient} = 90.51\%$$

These figures show that the research instrument used by the analyst and the researcher was reliable.

Data collection

Data was collected in two major steps:

The first step: The researcher and the second analyst each identified the WH-questions in separate copies of

the textbook.

The second stage: The researcher and the second analyst categorized all questions again using the research instrument. When they finished categorizing the questions the researcher began counting the frequency of each level of questions in both forms.

Findings and interpretations

What are the cognitive levels of the Wh-questions in the reading comprehension passages in the textbook Results and their frequency?

In order to answer the research question, the researcher

analyzed all the textbook reading comprehension WH-questions, and then collected all the results. These results are presented in Table 1 which presents the level of the question and the frequency and percentages for each level in each learning unit of the book.

Table 1

Frequencies and Percentages of the WH-Questions in the Six Levels of the Cognitive Domain in Bloom's Taxonomy in Each Learning Unit in the Textbook Results for 4 points

Level of question	Unit One	Unit Two	Unit Three	Unit Four	Unit Five	Unit Six	Unit Seven	Total	Percentage
Knowledge	1	1	2	6	0	2	1	13	10.48
Comprehension	7	9	5	8	7	10	5	51	41.10
Application	1	1	1	2	1	3	2	11	8.86
Analysis	3	1	3	3	4	5	1	20	16.12
Synthesis	1	3	1	2	1	2	2	12	9.67
Evaluation	2	4	1	2	2	5	1	17	13.70
Total	15	19	13	23	15	27	12	124	100

The researcher obtained these results by thoroughly studying the content of the textbook *Results* and listing all the WH- questions that appeared on each page. Each unit consists of two reading comprehension passages. The researcher collected 124 questions and then used the research tool to analyze the questions and calculate

the percentage for each level of the cognitive domain according to Bloom's taxonomy.

These same results are also presented in Table 2 to show the total frequencies and percentages of the WH-questions in the six levels of the cognitive domain in Bloom's taxonomy in the textbook *Results*.

Table 2

Total frequencies and Percentages of the WH-Questions in the Six Levels of the Cognitive Domain in Bloom's Taxonomy in the Textbook Results

Level of question	Frequency	Percentage
Knowledge	13	10.48
Comprehension	51	41.10
Application	11	8.86
Analysis	20	16.12
Synthesis	12	9.67
Evaluation	17	13.7
Total	124	100

Table 2 shows the frequencies and percentages of the six levels of cognitive domain in Bloom's taxonomy. The frequencies in the table range from 11 - 51, while percentages range from 8.86% to 41.10%. The level that appeared most frequently was the comprehension level. This finding is not surprising since it confirms the

results of almost all the other studies that were discussed in the review of related literature in this present study. Moreover, the textbook is written for 4 point high school students (mid level).The application and the synthesis levels have the lowest percentage and frequency.

The outstanding finding in this study as opposed to other studies was that the analysis level appeared at a frequency of 20 and a percentage of 16.12%. The remaining level of evaluation appeared at frequency of 17 and percentage of 13.7%. This result is acceptable since each reading passage has one question on the evaluation level.

The following can be learned from these results:

These results show that the author of *Results* placed the most emphasis on comprehension. This implies that the authors of this textbook are perhaps catering for the students' needs and levels. They emphasized the comprehension levels because they know that this text book is written for four pointers and not for five pointers.

Since grammar and vocabulary questions in the old English curriculum called for limited answers rather than higher thinking processes of interpretation, analysis or evaluation, it can be assumed that the authors of the textbook were influenced a great deal by these questions and still applied the same types of questions.

Since the book was written for students whose mother tongue is not English, it can be assumed that the authors wanted to make it easier for the students to cope with the learning material by posing questions that called for mid-level thinking processes, whose answers are clear and do not demand synthesis or evaluation.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The textbook *Results for Four Points* tries, to some extent, to develop students' higher thinking processes, however, the authors of this textbook place mostly the emphasis on comprehension. This textbook, according to Chall and Conard (1991) would rate lower than one that demands synthesis, analysis and evaluation.

The types of questions that the former English curriculum generated, seems to have had an impact on the way the author of *Results* wrote the questions. Workshops should be organized to teach textbook authors how to formulate questions at all levels. Educators with expertise in formulating questions should be involved in writing textbooks. Workshops should be conducted to familiarize textbook authors with the new curriculum for English.

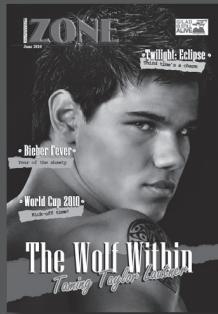
The researcher recommends that the textbook *Results* should be analyzed again regarding the level of questions in relation to the affective and psychomotor domains.

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בוגרים

תלמידי תיכון
(י-ב')תלמידי חטיבת בנים
(ג-ט')תלמידי יסודי
(ד-ה')

תלמידי יסודי (ד-ה')

אנגלית מושלמת על פיה הג'רוזלם פוסט

Dear ETAI Members,

In June 2010, The Jerusalem Post's kids and teen magazines were approved by the Pedagogical Committee of the Ministry of Education for use in the national English language curriculum.

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TESTING VOCABULARY IN A STORYPhyllis Oded (*phylliso@015.net.il*)

Many teachers test vocabulary by giving a bank of 15-20 new words, sometimes even in Hebrew. Their students are then presented with a series of unrelated sentences and have to put the correct word in each sentence according to the meaning. Thus, in some cases, the vocabulary test has turned into a memory test of words learned for the exam and then quickly forgotten.

By using the vocabulary exam/worksheet I have created, the teacher picks out 10 interesting, meaningful, useful or frequent vocabulary items used in a particular story or

reading passage. Students have to think as they connect this term or phrase to the passage, and also support their answer. There may be many correct answers, but the students' skills in thinking and writing are challenged. To do it successfully, they must have read and understood the passage. Enjoy!

Title of the story: _____

What do you think of **in connection with the story** when you see each of the 10 words/expressions below and why?

1. makes me think of
because
2. makes me think of
because
3. makes me think of
because
4. makes me think of
because
5. makes me think of
because
6. makes me think of
because
7. makes me think of
because
8. makes me think of
because
9. makes me think of
because
10. makes me think of
because

On the back, write a 5-sentence summary of the story.

* Teacher will fill in the words/expressions that pertain to each story

Phyllis Oded has been teaching English in Israel since 1967. Although she is officially retired, she still teaches because she loves teaching. © Phyllis Oded

USE OF FILM IN THE CLASSROOM

Bev Stock (*bev@macam.ac.il*)

The use of film in the classroom can add a great deal to our teaching. It is now easier than ever to use films in schools. Students enjoy watching movies for a variety of reasons. They get exposure to natural language in a non-threatening setting. Furthermore, movies provide knowledge of different cultures. For the teacher of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) this medium can be used to practice and consolidate language points, encourage conversation and debate amongst students and to develop listening skills. It is important to plan carefully and to use film to meet teaching objectives. Segmented viewing, sometimes referred to as using film clips, tends to result in more active participation by the students and ensures more English language learning.

Film is a medium which touches upon all of the domains. By having students watch a segment of a film they gain information (Access to Information). They hear English used authentically (Appreciation of Language). Depending on the choice of film our students can increase their knowledge and sensitivity to other cultures (Appreciation of Culture). Many literary pieces have been portrayed on film and hence exposure to such movies relates to the domain of Appreciation of Literature. Pre-, while or post-viewing activities involve the domains of Social Interaction and Presentation.

Use of film in the classroom does require a great deal of work on the part of the teacher. Films should not be used simply as a medium of entertainment, as an outside classroom assignment or as a treat. Films offer endless opportunities for pedagogically sound activities. However, the activity, like all teaching activities, needs to be planned carefully. It is important to watch the film first to make sure that it is appropriate for the age of your students and the language point you want to focus on.

Equally, you need to prepare the equipment and the room beforehand. Ideally you should be able to darken the room to help screen visibility. Check that the equipment is working, and make sure that the video or DVD is set to the start of the film or the section you want to watch.

I will use the 1964 movie *My Fair Lady* to demonstrate how, as an EFL teacher, I can use film to enrich my teaching and develop my students' English language skills. This particular movie will supplement the reading of George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion*. It provides an opportunity to discuss accents and language use as a marker of social class. The rich costumes and settings develop cultural awareness of Edwardian England. Universal themes of social class and the role of the woman

in society also emerge from the film. Furthermore, it will provide visual material to stimulate writing. The lyrics can be used as the basis of listening comprehension development. The opening scene provides an opportunity to discuss status and class in society. Descriptive writing can be stimulated by the Ascot racetrack scene. The treatment of Eliza is central to this story and can be a focus of discussion and extended writing. Finally, the last scene lends itself to creative writing in the form of predicting a continuation of the film.

Teaching songs in the EFL classroom is a well known method of developing language proficiency. Students are exposed to authentic language and pronunciation. Songs can be chosen for topic relevance which can be subject relevant or grammar relevant. Before starting to read the play or watch the movie I would teach the song "Why Can't the English Learn to Speak" from the movie's soundtrack. First, I would let students watch the song. Then, I would then ask content related questions such as:

"Who is the singer referring to?" "According to the singer, what happens if you use incorrect language?" and "What is said about Hebrew?"

I would then have the students listen to the song a second time. This time they would have to complete a cloze where certain words of the song are omitted. After correcting the exercise I would play the segment again and encourage the students to sing along with the soundtrack. (The lyrics can be found at sites listed at the end of this article.)

The opening scene can be used as a basis for a discussion about social status and class differences. I would begin by having students write down associations with the words "class" and "status." Students can then share their lists. This activity focuses on speaking and listening skills. They then view the opening scene at the Opera House gate. While watching, the students jot down points which show a difference between the classes. After watching the scene I would facilitate a discussion of the markers of social class, insuring that the markers of clothing, politeness, manners and the way they speak are all mentioned.

Writing skills are very important in developing language proficiency. After letting the students watch the Ascot race scene (from 117.30 minutes into the movie until 125 minutes into the movie), they can write a paragraph describing what they just saw. When students have completed their first drafts they could peer edit and then

rewrite. In the classroom, I would share some of their writing.

Oral skills are also important in the EFL classroom. Teachers need to provide opportunities and stimulus for discussion, which is at times free and at times carefully monitored. A scene I would use to stimulate oral work would be the scene after the ball (from 147 minutes into the movie until 152 minutes into the movie.) Eliza has been successfully passed off as a princess. Pickering and Higgins are pleased and congratulate each other in front of Higgins' servants. But they completely ignore Eliza's role in their strategy. After viewing this scene I would divide the students into pairs and have them discuss the scene. Discussion prompts would include:

Why did the men ignore Eliza? How would you react to being ignored in this way? Why do you think Eliza was successful as a princess? Why was Eliza unhappy? Do you think that what Higgins did is really possible?

The final activity would be based on creative writing. Students view the final scenes (from 236 minutes into the movie until the end.) The task would be to write a continuation of the story. As in the descriptive writing task, I would ask students to peer edit their first drafts. An enjoyable option would be to let the students vote on the best ending. Such an activity would stimulate discussion and debate.

An alternative activity could be based on expository writing. This also depends on the students having completed the reading of the Pygmalion play-script. After the students watch the end as adapted in the musical, they could discuss the differences between the two versions. I would ask the students to write an essay discussing the differences. The following questions can be used to guide their work:

How did the play by Shaw end? How did the scene we just watched end? What is the difference? Why do you think Shaw refused to pair off the protagonists? Why does the musical have a more conventional romance between Eliza and Higgins?

There are many films which can be used in our classrooms. Some general ideas to use with films are listed below:

- Stop the film or segment at a particular moment and ask students to predict what the characters will do next.
- Pause at a certain point and ask the students, "What did you just see?" This can be done as a whole class activity or as a pair activity. Alternatively you can have the students write a response to your question.
- Students must retell an episode of a movie in as

much detail as possible.

- Show the film clip without sound and have the students provide the sound track. Alternatively let the students hear the sound track without the image and have them imagine what is happening. After they have shared their ideas either orally or in writing, show the sound with the image and have the students see if they successfully constructed the dialogue.

There are many advantages of using film in the classroom. Films are motivating and generally students like watching them. Students tend to absorb language and get the general gist of what is said even if the language level is high. Film provides a realistic and meaningful context. Often contemporary issues that are relevant to our students are dealt with. The medium of film provides an opportunity for our students to be exposed to different native speaker voices, slang, reduced speeches, stress, accents, and dialects. Film is a powerful tool for language acquisition and a rich resource of intrinsically motivating materials for learners.

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<http://www.mrqe.com> (movie review quest engine)
<http://www.cinemachine.com>
<http://screentalk.org>
<http://www.teachwithmovies.org> (organize films by theme and by genre)
<http://www.eslnotes.com> (provide definitions of words and idioms)
www.dailyscript.com
www.script-o-rama.com (scripts)
<http://www.dvddemystified.com/dvdfaq.html> (DVD)

FAQ

For the lyrics to “Why Can’t the English” visit:
<http://www.allmusicals.com/lyrics/myfairlady/whycanttheenglish.htm>

<http://www.stlyrics.com/lyrics/myfairlady/whycanttheenglish.htm>

http://www.allthelyrics.com/lyrics/my_fair_lady_soundtrack/why_cant_the_english-lyrics-78102.html

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THE WAY TO WONDERLAND: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO LEARNING

Laura Shashua (lasha205@gmail.com)

Part One: A multidisciplinary model is born

‘Mrs. Whitehead said, “The lesson was progressing satisfactorily. I’d asked the children to draw Adam’s ribs, from which Eve was made, when Chanel Toby asked why we were, and I quote, “having to do ribs again, when we’ve already done ‘em in biology’.” (*Queen Camilla*, Sue Townsend)

Chanel Toby isn’t the only one who finds difficulty in making connections. Hardly a year goes by without at least one pupil in one of my classes saying, “Why are you talking about history (or geography, or literature) in an English lesson?”

Vaguely recalling a model (authorship long forgotten) that I had read long ago back during teacher training, I began to ask myself why pupils should be making comments like these. Beane (1991) conveniently provided an answer: “To students, the typical curriculum presents an endless array of facts and skills that are unconnected, fragmented, and disjointed... It is time we faced the fact that subject areas or disciplines of knowledge around which the curriculum has traditionally been organized are actually territorial spaces carved out by academic scholars for their own purposes... When we are confronted in real life with a puzzling situation, we don’t ask which part is mathematics, which part history, and so on. Instead we draw on or seek out knowledge and skill from any and all sources that might be helpful. In short, the school constructs and organizes a curriculum that is an artifice of life...” (p. 9)

Further reading then revealed that integrated instruction removes “artificial divisions between subjects” and allows teachers “to address content in more depth” (Barton & Smith, 2000, p. 54), while it transpired that

the New Revised Curriculum for Northern Ireland states that “...compartmentalisation of subjects is perceived as undesirable and greater integration across disciplines is now favoured” (Alexander, Walsh, Jarman & McClune, 2008, p. 23).

As English coordinator, and armed with these research findings, I began hinting to colleagues teaching other subjects that I would like to team up to give a joint lesson. As pedagogical coordinator for the school as well, I knew I would have no problems giving myself the green light for the undertaking. Within a year, my PR exercise began to pay off: I was approached both by the Bible teacher and the Hebrew Literature teacher. Multidisciplinary learning at Rabin School in Azor was born.

Part Two: Who By Fire

Aimed at the 8th grade “Science” class, the *Who By Fire* study day was held during the Ten Days of Awe between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. At around that time, Leonard Cohen was in the country, and constantly in the news. What better way to link a centuries old prayer with a modern day musician who had written his own take on the theme? With the aim of discussing the litany *Unetaneh Tokef* and its relevance down the generations and around the world, each session was led by different teachers, who were also present in the room throughout the day to listen to their colleagues. In this way, a continuity was built into the structure of the study day which enabled each teacher to relate to previous sessions:

Hour 1: What is a litany? (Jewish Heritage/Bible teacher).

Hour 2: *Unetaneh Tokef* and its relevance to the Day of Atonement (Jewish Heritage/Bible teacher).

Hours 3-4: Who By Fire (English teacher): a response to the song by Leonard Cohen; listening comprehension (a videotaped interview with the artist talking about his work).

Hour 5: Documentary movie *Unetaneh Tokef*: the story of Kibbutz Beit Hashita and its soldiers who fell in the Yom Kippur war.

Hour 6: (held on a different day): *Piyut leYamim HaNora'im*. An analysis of the modern poem by Eran Tsalgov and its relevance to *Unetaneh Tokef*. (Hebrew Literature teacher).

The success of the day exceeded all expectations. Aside from the predictable fact that the pupils acknowledged in their reflections that they had learned about litanies, discovered who Leonard Cohen was, and increased their knowledge of English vocabulary, the Hebrew Literature teacher also reported that discussion in his class had also risen to the philosophical realms of “man is nothing”. Eighty-five per cent of the pupils expressed a wish for additional similar study days. Seven months later, they found themselves in Wonderland.

Part Three: The Way to Wonderland

Originally intended to coincide with the release of the Tim Burton movie *Alice in Wonderland* in March, the study day eventually gelled in mid-May. The preparation for this teaching unit took two days: with the pupils refreshing themselves with an abridged Hebrew version of the story, and then a focus on the pivotal “Hall of Doors” section in the original English. The day itself was given over to discussing dilemmas: from how Alice decides to eat the cake and drink the potion, to how the pupils solve problems of their own:

Day 1: A reading of the abridged text in Hebrew (the Special Education teacher and coordinator of the Student Council).

Day 2: A reading of the “Hall of Doors” scene in English (English teacher).

Days 1 and 2: Artistically inclined pupils paint a Wonderland backdrop for the lesson the following week (Art teacher).

The Study Day:

Hour 1: Introduction

a) Song *Alice Underground* (Avril Lavigne): What is the writer trying to say? (The pupils write down their ideas for later reference).

b) Growing and Shrinking: the physical side.

Discussion in groups: have you ever felt really big or really small next to something? Have you ever seen yourself growing or shrinking?

Hour 2: Alice's Dilemma

- An examination both in English and Hebrew of Alice's dilemma in the “Eat Me, Drink Me” scene with reference to Victorian educational values: Alice disobeys what she has been taught by adults.
- Class discussion: what processes are involved in solving dilemmas?
- A reprise of the song *Alice Underground*. How does the writer's message fit in with the theme of the lesson?

Hour 3: Solving Dilemmas

- Once again in groups, the children are presented with a number of problems relevant to their age group and invited to solve them. On the way, they are asked to discuss the factors that helped them reach their solution.
- Screening of the first ever movie made of *Alice in Wonderland* (1903); a comparison with the video of the song by Avril Lavigne.

Homework: Create your own Wonderland: a short essay in English and reflection on the lesson in Hebrew.

In contrast to the previous study day, a different pedagogical approach was taken: two teachers taught in tandem for three hours, each complementing the other and managing the class as one. The result was a blurring of the lines between disciplines to the point where the Hebrew teacher asked questions in Hebrew and the children would answer in English. The pupils' reactions were overwhelming, with many remarking that they had never considered looking at *Alice in Wonderland* in any other light other than that of the version made by Walt Disney.

Part Four: Looking to the future

From their reflections, it is clear that the children enjoyed this innovative approach to learning. Yet they were not the only beneficiaries. First of all, the level of conversation in the staff room changed. Topics ranged from existentialism and philosophy to the symbolism used by Lewis Carroll; a far cry from the usual discussion as to why there is never enough milk in the refrigerator. On the study days themselves, other teachers in the school were also invited to come to the sessions and participate if they wished. Thus, on the *Unetaneh Tokef* study day, the lesson was observed by a science teacher and a history teacher; the *Alice* session was watched by teachers of literature, English and sport. On both occasions, these teachers also joined in the class discussion, and much to the pupils' amazement, even spoke in English.

Although the common thread between the study days has so far been English, it is hoped that eventually other

teachers will take the initiative and develop similar programs of their own. Reorganizing an entire school curriculum at this stage may not be feasible, but at least these one-off opportunities are a step to recognizing the vision of Barton and Smith (2000) and removing, at least for a short while, those “artificial divisions”.

Admittedly, these sessions are not necessarily easy to organize. Long-term planning is essential, and lessons such as these require a rescheduling of the timetable and perhaps a reorganization of the classroom or library. Nevertheless, when collaborating with like-minded colleagues, the preparation is hugely enjoyable. Naturally, all this experimentation could not have been achieved without the cooperation of Mrs. Merav Amdursky, and



The Mad Hatter (the author) and Alice (Merav Nasi, the Hebrew Literature teacher) enter Wonderland with the help of Avril Lavigne.

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Mr. Noam Doktor, the principal and vice-principal of Rabin Junior High School in Azor, and it is to them I am deeply indebted for their encouragement and help.

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Alice (Merav Nasi, teacher of Hebrew Literature) and the Mad Hatter (the author) introduce 8th graders to Alice

WHY TEACH THE “CHAGIM”?

Bev Stock (bevstock@gmail.com)

After Tu B’Shvat, the almond trees are in blossom. The stores are filled with Purim costumes. At that time, I am already thinking of who to invite to our Pesach Seder. The *chagim* are definitely an integral part of my life. I also include them in my teaching. Why do I think it is so important to teach the *chagim*? There are six main reasons which I will expand on below. Furthermore they fulfill a number of principles underlying language learning upon which the curriculum is based. These reasons and principles apply to teachers all sectors in the population teaching about their own holidays. Research also justifies teaching the *chagim*.

Firstly there is the cultural aspect. We are living in Israel and the *chagim* are an integral part of the lifestyle. The school calendar is arranged around them. Our students should know about the meaning and relevance of these

holidays. They are a part of the society we live in, and our role as teachers is to reinforce and extend society values.

Second, the holidays are spaced out over the year and can provide a focus and a reason for breaking the routine of our teaching. We have the opportunity to go outside of the textbook and bring in other material.

Third, many teachers see incorporating the *chagim* into their teaching schedules as a vehicle to provide the children with fun and something lighter than usual. While I definitely see this as a reason for teaching the *chagim*, it should not be seen as the main aim of including this subject matter. It should not be seen as a time to provide “busy work” such as colouring in a picture or carrying out a handicraft activity related to the

festival. Providing fun is an important but secondary reason to teach the *chagim*.

Fourth, using holidays as our subject matter provides a framework for reinforcing a teaching point. For example you have been working on the past tense with your sixth grade students and a holiday is coming up. Your discussion can revolve around what the students did last year for the festival. A writing exercise can then follow giving the students the opportunity to reinforce their awareness, use and understanding of this language construct.

My fifth reason to encourage you to teach the *chagim* is the framework they provide to review language items taught earlier in the year. For example Shavuoth which comes towards the end of the school year is a good festival for reviewing vocabulary presented to your grade threes. Fruit is a lexical area which lends itself to both the festival and the need to review vocabulary. Or in grade six you want something to review the reading skills taught throughout the year. The topic of Shavuoth provides you with a vehicle for this in that you can use a reading about the holiday.

Finally teaching the *chagim* provides us as teachers with a way to ensure that we impact the different domains which underpin the curriculum we are using. Access to information, social interaction, presentation and appreciation of literature, language and culture can all be touched upon when we plan lessons around the subject of the holidays. Teaching content related materials provides a vehicle to access these domains and to work towards achievement of standards as laid down in section two of the curriculum.

When using the *chagim* as subject matter throughout the year you fulfill the following principles which underlie language learning and are part of the driving force of the English Curriculum. Language learning is facilitated when pupils

- build on their prior language and world knowledge
- have opportunities to learn by doing
- use language as a means for gaining information in other areas
- can see the usefulness of what they are learning
- have opportunities to use the target language outside the classroom.

Furthermore, as English teachers we are able to use *chagim* as subject matter to make our teaching more effective in that the teaching of the *chagim* provides teachers with the opportunity to create a language rich environment. Each holiday should be accompanied by

a wall display related to the topic. It can be prepared by the teacher or generated by the students themselves. For example before Rosh Hashanah the students can prepare and display New Year wishes. As we can safely assume that most of our students have prior knowledge of this subject matter, our teaching is more effective in that it activates and builds on the pupils' background knowledge.

Alternative assessment, continuous assessment, performance based tasks, and portfolios are all concepts we are familiar with. The portfolio is a way to unify the holidays presented throughout the year. Students can keep their holiday related work in a portfolio. Teachers will have to provide guidelines of how this is to be done and to monitor it over the year. This is good training for junior high and high school. I have found that an on-going portfolio of this nature increases interest and motivation while fostering a sense of pride in their work.

Research from the field also supports and justifies teaching the *chagim* in our English classes. CBI (content based instruction) is defined as "the integration of particular content with language teaching aims." This basic definition must be kept in mind when we teach the *chagim*. The content provides a vehicle for the acquisition of EFL.

Research in immersion and bilingual education as well as content based ESL has consistently demonstrated that using the target language as a way of learning content is effective. While less research has been done in CBI and EFL, the underlying principles involved in implementing CBI have led to it also being applied to EFL. In Israel thematic units which are a form of CBI have long been a basis of our EFL teaching.

In the United States CBI in EFL is supported by the 1996 Standards for Foreign Language Learning. Research has been carried out in post-secondary foreign language contexts. This research shows that CBI results in language learning, content learning, increased motivation levels and a higher interest level. (Grabe and Stoller, 1997). In England CBI is referred to as interdisciplinary instruction. It is becoming increasingly popular particularly at the Middle School level. This popularity has been fueled by a "growing recognition that learning is improved when students are able to understand the underlying relationships that connect what they are taught from one class period to the next." (Met, 1996). In the Israeli elementary classroom this tenet underscores the interdisciplinary approach to the yearly theme which is also addressed by the English teacher.

Theoretical considerations support the teaching of the *chagim*. They are an important part of our national lives.

This in itself is enough justification to teach them. But perhaps above all is the fact that it is fun to teach about our national and religious holidays.

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Writing in the classroom and beyond...

We are all aware of the need for writing in the classroom. It is included in all domains of the curriculum. Many teachers do some very creative and worthwhile activities focusing on this very important skill.

I am always looking for information related to writing. Do you know about IFAW?

IFAW stands for Israel Forum for Academic Writing. It was formed 2 years ago to connect people involved in teaching and researching Academic writing here in Israel. There have been a number of study days relating to writing in the classroom.

At the end of July there will be an international conference addressing the topic of writing. The topic will be "Academic Writing and Beyond in Multicultural Societies"

WHEN? July 28-29, 2010

WHERE? Mofet Tel Aviv

SPEAKERS – Deborah Holdstein

Chris Anson

Otto Kruze

John Harbord

Further details can be found on the website www.ifawconference.org

Hope to see you there!

Bev

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TEACHING CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS / HOTS: PERFECT TOGETHER WELCOME TO THE BRAVE NEW WORLD!

Yehezkal Bund (yehezkal18@yahoo.com)

Introduction:

Conflicts are present in our world and in classrooms. These conflicts shape the behaviors, ideas, and interpersonal relationships of our students and how they relate to their teachers. As society becomes more complicated, and the pressures on today's families and youth mount, students must learn the skills to negotiate conflicts. The dynamics in today's English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom often mirror the greater environment around us.



The EFL classroom readily lends itself to Conflict Resolution Education. It is a perfect venue for students to learn conflict resolution skills and utilize them. Teaching the subject of conflict resolution does not at all mean that the basics of EFL education must fall by the wayside. On the contrary, Conflict Resolution Education can challenge the students to use their English skills in "real life" situations, allowing students to apply what they have learned in a meaningful way.

Lessons and projects where students learn conflict resolution skills can create a better learning environment for all involved. They can increase harmony in the classroom and build a better school community. They can also create a classroom environment that allows for better classroom management. As the world outside the classroom has become more complex, so have the challenges facing today's teacher managing the classroom.

The classroom has long been a safe place for students to evaluate and assess the world around them, while examining their own and their fellow classmates' connection to it. As part of Conflict Resolution Education, students must analyze their own beliefs and behavior. They are challenged to look at common problems from new perspectives. Lessons in that context naturally lend themselves to the development and use of critical thinking skills, also known as HOTS - Higher Order Thinking Skills. The inclusion of these "HOTS", and how to best teach them, is currently being debated in the Israel EFL education world today.

The Brave New World Computer Simulation Game:

A computer activity called *The Brave New World* is a PowerPoint based simulation game, which presents students with a post-nuclear destruction world.

To play the game, students in small groups must choose which of the five out of eight survivors of the nuclear holocaust can stay in the bomb shelter and create the new society. The activity emphasizes team work. As part of the computer simulation, students learn the principles of active listening and basic conflict resolution skills. These principles and skills must be utilized by all participants to successfully play the game.

This activity has been done as pen and paper exercise in various educational settings for many years. In Israel, it is often done at youth movement meetings. However, by moving the activity into the 21st century as computer game, and tying it to conflict resolution, the exercise takes on a new life and vitality. The computer allows the game to be a multimedia experience with eye-catching images, songs, and videos.

In order to create the Brave New World, the student groups are provided with eight profiles of individuals who have survived the nuclear catastrophe. According to the story line, these people were all on a fictional island nation of Peaceutopia at the time of the attack. Each survivor profile is detailed (see example below). Factors such as age, sex, and social class, race, level of education, ethnic background and religion, mental and physical health are purposely varied for each character.

Example of Survivor Profile:

Ryo Inui is an 18-year-old music student. Of Japanese descent, he was born and has lived his whole life on Peaceutopia. Well liked by his friends, he is a gifted guitar and piano player. He also sings well. He is the winner of Peaceutopia's "Brand New Star" TV show. He has severe learning disabilities, which affect his reading and writing skills.



As the groups discuss which characters will be given a chance to build the new society, students must evaluate each character based on the aforementioned factors. As they go through process, participants must examine their own biases and stereotypes towards others. One survivor profile includes the same data for one character, but each group sees a different photo portrait. This later fuels discussion about judging a person by their physical appearance.

The simulation can easily be altered to allow a class examine and challenge its social/cultural biases by

simply changing the background story and/or images of the survivor profiles. New characters can be added and current ones can be changed. These changes can easily be made by altering the PowerPoint presentation.

The current version of the Brave New World on the Brave New Conflict Resolution website (<http://sites.google.com/site/braveconflictresolution/>) has been developed to present the game to teachers. Subsequently, that version was altered and pilot tested with a group of highly advanced 5-point tenth grade students in a Jerusalem school. This student version of the game, with a glossary, is also available on the website.

These versions of the game include characters with background variations and were specifically designed for a classroom population of secular/ traditional Israelis to allow students to reflect upon their own values and biases regarding Judaism, levels of religious observance, Zionism, etc.

Perhaps, by being more in touch with these issues after the playing and discussing the computer simulation game, students will be in a better position to work on healing the conflicts between secular/traditional Israelis and those in the various segments of society. Students will gain both new awareness of the issues involved and also be more fully cognizant of their own positions regarding these questions. Most importantly, they will now have the necessary tools to engage in successful dialogue.

For schools with limited resources, the Brave New World activity can also be done as a standard pen and paper exercise. A low color version of the activity is attached to the website to facilitate lower cost printing.

The Presentation of the Game to a Class

Brave New World works best as part of a multi-lesson project.

As part of the pre-game preparation, it is important that the conflict resolutions strategies are introduced to the students. Prior to the playing of the game, there should be at least one introductory lesson, which helps students begin to think about conflicts. As the game uses a nouveau- Cold War alternative history scenario, students should be familiarized with the Cold War between the USA and USSR and the concept of alternative history. Many of the most popular commercial video games played by youth today involve creating new worlds and alternative history.

After playing the game, students present and share their final decisions as to which characters were selected to create the new world in the following lesson. Reflection on the group process and the conflict resolution skills learned should also be part of any final activity.

In general, these pre- and post lessons can take various forms and allow for teacher creativity. Teachers can tailor their lessons for the EFL knowledge, ability level and group dynamic of their specific classes. For example, the post game presentation lesson can be done as a class discussion or debate. Various artistic modalities such as the creation of audiovisual posters or drama skits can be employed.

The concomitant lessons and the computer simulation game, by design and necessity, include all the basic skills of EFL: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The game and accompanying lessons can be used to reinforce other facets of EFL education, such as the teaching of relevant speech acts for the expression of opinions. The survivor profiles can be modified to practice unseen texts. Pre lessons can include the introduction of necessary vocabulary. Grammar aspects such as conditional tenses can also be applied to the game.

It is crucial that efforts are made to create a safe classroom environment, before the students go through the computer simulation. Students must feel comfortable to express their opinions and explore new ideas. The use of the conflict resolutions strategies and active listening skills are the foundation of this process.

Brave New World and the English Curriculum in Israel

Brave New World covers all the domains in the English Curriculum: Access to Information, Social Interaction, Presentation and Appreciation of Language/Literature and Culture. It also uses many of the skills, which are part of the new HOTS literature program for Bagrut like applying, classifying, comparing and contrasting, problem solving, generating possibilities, distinguishing different perspectives, etc.

For more information about the Brave New World computer simulation game or assistance in planning the game for your classroom, please check out the Brave Conflict Resolution website: <http://sites.google.com/site/braveconflictresolution/>. Your feedback and comments are welcome!

The Brave New World computer simulation game was developed by Yechezkel Bund. Please do not use or alter the activity without prior permission. Contact me at yehezkal18@yahoo.com

Note: I would like to thank Valerie Jakar of David Yellin Teacher's College and CRELL (Conflict Resolution for English language Learners) for her help and encouragement.

Yechezkel Bund is an active member of the EFL teaching community in Israel and CRELL.

MAKING SENSE OF NONSENSE: NONSENSE POETRY AS A MULTI-PURPOSE ART FORM

Orley Marron (orley@multilect.com)

“Tis the voice of the Lobster; I heard him declare,
“You have baked me too brown, I must sugar my hair.”
As a duck with its eyelids, so he with his nose
Trims his belt and his buttons, and turns out his toes.’

(Alice’s recitation, Lewis Carroll,
Alice in Wonderland, p. 139)

Ordinary people use the word *nonsense* in connection with situations or statements that don’t conform to the facts as they are generally held to be. “My dog solves trigonometric equations” is nonsense. *Sense*, on the other hand, indicates a state where events or statements are *meaningful, understandable*, capable of being evaluated as correct. *Sense* often depends on *norms*, or the rules and accepted facts of the *society or system*. In the system of language, we rely on “*a fixed pattern of mental relations between letters, words or events*” to evaluate whether a statement “makes sense” (Elizabeth Sewell, 1952, p. 3). These patterns include syntactic, grammatical, and pragmatic (convention and real-world-governed) rules. The Mock Turtle, declaring Alice’s recitation as “uncommon nonsense,” points out a problematic pattern of relations in her words:

‘But about his toes?’ the Mock Turtle persisted. ‘How could he turn them out with his nose, you know?’
(Carroll, 1970, p. 140)

While it is relatively easy for us to make sense of ordinary everyday language, the figurative language of poetry is often quite challenging. Poets rarely adhere to facts or even to specific social / historical norms: April is not necessarily a cruel month, lovers are not the legs of a compass, and the author who states “My wife whose hair is a brush fire \ whose thoughts are summer lightning” (Lakoff and Turner, 1986, p. 93), is hardly truthful. As readers and as teachers before a class, our tendency is to immediately evaluate the content of such notions, attempting to extract meaning or make sense of them, just as we do with any language string. But this is probably not the best way to approach poetry. Poetry, and other texts we categorize as literary, resist the “normal” decoding. Literary texts, for example, require us to hypothesize and test connections, or bridges, between unfamiliar or “senseless” images and phrases in the text and our own mental frame of reference and embodied experiences. George Lakoff, Mark Johnson and Mark Turner use the term “mapping” to describe this process of bridging mental images in order to make sense of them at the conceptual level (*Metaphors We Live By*, 1980, *More than Cool Reason*, 1989). Thus “Cruel

April” could be mapped to the experience of a time that evokes painful memories, although one would also want to note that this is exactly opposite to the convention of happy and fruitful springtime. The image of fire and hair can be reconciled through color, or brightness, or even temperament (mapping knowledge of dangerous and volatile brush fires to the image of a woman’s hair “as an outward manifestation of her mind,” p. 94).

Nonsense poetry, however, stretches to a breaking point our ability to bridge gaps; it seems to lie at the extreme end of the poetic scale, its language teasingly evading mapping and logical interpretation, shying away from content analysis. Something about its syntactical structure strikes us as strange and incongruous. Meaning is slippery, unconventional, inexpressible. Note how Carroll’s ship crew attempts to capture the elusive Snark:

They sought it with thimbles, they sought it with care;
They pursued it with forks and hope;
They threatened its life with a railway-share;
They charmed it with smiles and soap.

(Lewis Carroll, 2006, p. 63)

Obviously the word combinations or patterns in this excerpt (and Alice’s recitation above) are bizarre. How can one seek a monster with thimbles, or threaten its life with a railway-share? On a scale of “impossibilities,” cruel April seems more easily explainable than charming with soap. And what about the following excerpt from Jabberwocky? Can any uninitiated reader map images and make sense of it?

‘Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

(Lewis Carroll, 1970, p. 191)

It seems that we’ve entered into a world of language that denies the familiar hierarchy of the rules and relations we need in order to construct sense. But Nonsense poetry is not really a state of haphazard syntax and chaotic disorder. Elizabeth Sewell claims that, on the contrary, Nonsense poetry is actually a carefully limited world, controlled and directed by reason and its own laws. It mimics structures of games, converting words into game elements, fusing poetry and play. Unlike dreamlike or hallucinatory types of poems, where the language is ambiguous, shifting and dreamlike (for instance, Coleridge’s “Kubla Khan”), the language of Nonsense poetry is clear, concrete and

wholly comprehensible (Sewell, 1952, p. 23). “You have baked me too brown, I must sugar my hair,” says the Lobster in Alice’s recitation. It may look like disorder, but the words, as groups of letters and sounds, are *not* disordered; the *syntax and grammar* are not disordered. The main aspect of language that Nonsense *does* disrupt is *reference*, the effect produced by a word or group of words in the mind (Sewell, 1952, p. 38). What frustrates the Mock Turtle is the illogical reference linking the Lobster’s nose and actions such as trimming one’s belt and buttons and turning out toes. The phrase “*Colorless green ideas sleep furiously*” coined by Noam Chomsky is another example of an irreconcilable reference. The individual words make sense and are arranged according to proper grammatical rules, yet they are not compatible: how can the color green refer to an idea, and how can a green object be colorless? The phrase “the square root of lovers” works similarly. Can lovers be subdivided mathematically? Yet, the *total* effect is an exciting, strange mixture, a re-application or manipulation of words.

Nonsense as Art

What, then, is so attractive about reading and teaching Nonsense poetry? As with other poetry, it works on the reader on multiple levels, aesthetic and cognitive. But because it so flagrantly defies easy logical interpretation, it allows us initially the freedom to focus more on the basic, *aesthetic* aspects of the poem, on the *art* underlying all poetry. We start out with a paradoxical requirement: *do not* search yet for content. Students’ English education forever demands they read for content, analyze “unseens” and informative articles and even poetry. With Nonsense poetry, the conventions are flouted. Carroll’s invented language, “Twas brillig and the slithy toves” – is the most extreme example of deliberate re-order. We relax our interpretative tendencies, and take the time and listen, repeatedly, becoming more attuned to the music of the poem, to its basic formal, abstract elements: rhyme, rhythm - colors and sounds. Nonsense poetry often uses small words, series or lists of elements, small number values (three, seven) and short staccato rhymes (dilly, nilly, willy). These characteristic patterns, the clear, concrete, colorful, repetitive, flowing sounds and images, together with the unconventional reference pattern, give the listener a sense of a game, of playfulness (Sewell, 1952, p. 26). “Sound” becomes “sense” – and words gain a power beyond meaning, becoming the play elements of an aesthetic game, evoking sensations through strange combinations, at once concrete and abstract, literal and symbolic. The musical effects are remarkable. Even the very religious Gerard Manley Hopkins adopted a similarly playful style to enhance

his poetry with music (Joseph J. Feeney, 2008, pp. 206, 560). As with viewers experiencing abstract painting, we experience larger sections of the piece as whole units, rather than searching for specific recognizable content in individual lines.

When teaching Jabberwocky I have the students read out loud, warning them ahead of time not to try and understand what they are saying and just to say the words enthusiastically: ‘Twas brillig, and the slithy toves, Did gyre and gimble in the wabe ...”. After reading once through, I point out the lines: “One, two! One, two! And through and through / The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!” and ask the students to show me the motions of the blade. Time and again, they perform wide hacking movements; when I ask “why” they reply: “snicker-snack *sounds* like such motions.” The basic premise of poetry, the fusion of sound and sense, emerges through an invented language

Nonsense is so enjoyable because it hovers on the edge of meaning, like a puzzle. After a couple of repetitions, patterns emerge and a vague idea of content takes shape. As Alice says when she first encounters the Jabberwocky: “ somehow it seems to fill my head with ideas – only I don’t exactly know what they are! However, *somebody killed something*: that’s clear, at any rate –.” After a few readings students will have some idea of something that happens, and now they can approach the poem line by line. Assuming that the grammatical structure of the lines is conventionally correct, the teacher can help students recognize, and perhaps tabulate on the board, sentence parts: adjectives, nouns, adverbs and verbs. Nonsense poetry illustrates for students their grasp of grammar, even if the vocabulary is unclear. Nouns are then easily categorized to locations, animals / creatures, characters, weapons, etc. and soon the *general meaning* of the story emerges – even though its *details* are never clear, and many of the words are nonsensical in regular English. Students enjoy constructing similar types of sentences and inventing nonsense words, unnatural references and phrase combinations – a process that gives them an insight into language building and poetry, as well as a sense of creative pleasure.

The idea or general “sense” that emerges as we read the Nonsense poem is of course part of its artistic expression. Many limericks, for instance, harbor humorous commentaries on society. But Nonsense is not necessarily comic, and pieces such as Jabberwocky and The Hunting of the Snark convey serious existential themes. Their playful music serves as a jarring contrast to the problems they express, such as our abrupt and frightening end:

In the midst of the word he was trying to say,
In the midst of his laughter and glee,
He had softly and suddenly vanished away –
For the Snark was a Boojum, you see.

“Nonsense” in such poems takes on a different perspective, reflecting concepts that, in our everyday life, are hard to accept or make sense of: sudden death, the passage of time, the elusiveness of happiness and our lack of control over unexpected events. Nonsense becomes sense, in its deepest and most emotive manifestation.

Note: The material discussed in this article, lesson plans and classroom handouts, is available at <http://www.etai.org.il/handouts.html> in the section headed ETAI Winter Conference – Be’er Sheva – December 2009.

Note: You can download the lesson plan and worksheets discussed in the article at <http://www.etai.org.il/handouts.html>. Scroll down to the section called “ETAI Winter Conference – Be’er Sheva – December 2009”

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Orley K. Marron holds a degree in art, an M.Sc. in Computer Science from Marist College and a Ph.D. in English Literature from Bar Ilan University. She is interested in art as well as fantastic and imaginative literature and has developed a course on the topic, which she taught at Bar Ilan University. In her dissertation she researched the literary function of animated art/crafted objects in the texts of Nathaniel Hawthorne and Lewis Carroll. She also has been teaching English for Native Speakers at Blich High School and composition/academic writing at the Achva College of Education. Her paper on Alien Mind interpretation, titled “Alternative ToM for Artificial Brains: A Logical Approach to Interpreting Alien Minds,” is scheduled to appear in the book Theory of Mind and Literature, available November 2010 (Eds. P. Leverage, H. Mancing, R. Schweickert, J. William). She has recently presented a paper titled “Eden and re-Creation of the Artist” at the Hawthorne Society Conference (June 2010, Concord, MA).

NOT EVEN LUKEWARM TO HOTS

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We have been teachers in Israel for many years. During that period, from time to time English teachers have griped and complained about all sorts of things, in all sorts of forums. But never has there been such an explosion of angry reactions as there has been against the new HOTS program for teaching Literature, which the Ministry introduced two years ago. We have many concerns about the program. We are not lone crackpots, but belong to a group of at least several hundred English teachers who have come forward and voiced their objections loudly and clearly, and put their names to letters and petitions.

Literature is not the issue. Most of us who are against the program were delighted to hear that Literature was going to be back in the Bagrut, but when we saw the program we were horrified. We are not lazy, nor are we opposed to change, as some have accused us of being, but our objections are many – pedagogical, financial and

administrative. Postponing the program for a year would have been useful, had it been accompanied by a serious and open dialogue with those teachers who oppose it. Removing one or two literary terms or HOTS from the list does nothing to endear the program to us, as our core objections have not been addressed.

So, what then are our objections?

Firstly, we believe that English as a Foreign Language in high school is neither the time nor the place to introduce higher order thinking skills. The HOTS program originated in the United States, and has been used there for 25 years with students who are native speakers of English. Dr. Stanley Pogrow, Professor of Educational Leadership at San Francisco State University, who developed the Higher Order Thinking Skills Project and the Hi-Perform School Initiative, wrote to us stating that the project “*is intended for students in grades*

4-8. In all the years, we have only used HOTS once with high school students in the 10th grade. We approved it because the students were recent immigrants who had not previously spent much time in school in their native countries. It was decided to combine intensive language development with HOTS in order to give them a sense of how to learn."

It seems clear, therefore, that HOTS **as a program** should be introduced in those subjects taught in the native language in grades 4-8! Higher order thinking skills should be introduced to young learners in their native language so that they can develop into thinking adults. It is illogical to do it the other way around, that is, to teach it first in a foreign language to teenagers.

Secondly, we are extremely concerned about the implementation of the program with four-point pupils. These pupils are studying English at a lower level because of their difficulties with foreign language acquisition. Many of them, and especially the "Mabar" pupils, have difficulty in abstract thinking, reading between the lines, picking up social clues and understanding cultures beyond their own experience. According to Professor Pogrow's research, these pupils are the most important candidates for HOTS – but in grades 4-8, in their native language, certainly not in grades 10-12, in a foreign language and in literature. Literature to them, in many respects, is a foreign language in itself!

As we have repeatedly stated we all teach literature and, for most of us, it is the basis for our most enjoyable lessons. Many thinking skills and literary terms are taught within the context of the literature. Yet our goal has always been the appreciation of the literature and NOT the acquisition of the skill of prediction, synthesis or comparing and contrasting, for example. These are important skills; however, we feel that the new program has made these skills the aim, rather than the vehicle for understanding and appreciating a literary text. In the new program it seems that we use the literature to teach the HOTS rather than the other way around. We believe that this program will deprive literature of its spontaneity, and turn the teaching of literature into something mechanical and technical.

Another major worry is having an internal grade become the ONLY grade for a single module if a school should decide to do a Log. At best, many logs will be pushed through in the last weeks of the last year, with demands on the teachers to accept them. There will be pressure from pupils, parents and even principals to raise the grades. This phenomenon is already familiar to most of us today and the stakes are much lower. In addition, a literary log does not meet the definition of standardized

testing, which must be both valid and reliable. This robs the national matriculation examination of any meaningfulness as a yardstick of standard achievement.

Most schools devote only 4 weekly hours to English. In recent years the curriculum has undergone many changes, some extremely demanding of the teachers. With the Modular Bagrut, administrative work has become a headache of monumental proportions. A research project was added to the English curriculum; compensation for the additional work entailed was promised but has never been paid. Now, we are expected to add HOTS to our literature programs. One of the most commonly heard complaints of teachers who have tried to implement the program was about the extra work load. And how exactly are we expected to teach this program along with all the other things we have to prepare our pupils for, without a substantial increase in the number of hours we have at our disposal?

A few months ago a forum of Jerusalem coordinators organized a protest against the HOTS and, within a very short time, 60 schools from all over the country signed on, refusing to implement the program in its present form. In addition, several individual teachers throughout the country organized petitions, letters and protests. This amounts to a substantial number of English teachers who are against this program, who don't want to implement it, and who are feeling angry and bitter about the fact that the Ministry does not seem to care. Surely the Ministry must understand that with this kind of opposition, it cannot succeed. What's the point of digging in its heels and forcing the HOTS down our throats? Even if we are forced to implement it, with this kind of bitterness, what chance is there that the program will succeed?

We are aware of the possible benefits of the program. Some teachers like the program; it places them back in the position of authority in the classroom. They become the holders of information, which is certainly not true of the modules. As lovers of literature, we welcome increasing its importance in the EFL classroom. Also, it means assessing specific material that has been taught as opposed to "unseen" material.

When asked by Dr. Shoshani if we had any suggestions we offered the following propositions which go beyond the purview of English language teaching.

- 1) Halt the program as required and continue it as a pilot or as an option until there is a greater consensus that all the concerns have been resolved satisfactorily.
- 2) Set up a committee to work on the changes to the program. The committee must include teachers from the field who have been vocal on the issue. We suggest greater transparency.

- 3) And most importantly, if the MOE is serious about the HOTS program then they must implement it first in the elementary schools and the junior high schools, in the native language, that is, in Hebrew or Arabic.

Note: This article is based on postings that originally appeared on the ETNI discussion list.

Tessa Shrem was born in South Africa and grew up there. She earned a BA in English and French Literature and a post-graduate teaching diploma at the Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg. After working for four years in South Africa, teaching both French as a foreign language and English to native English speakers she moved to Israel and has been a teacher of English here for the last 25 years, at Michlelet Ort in Jerusalem, where she also works as the coordinator of English studies. Tessa is very involved in and concerned about education and English learning, and served for many years on the Board of ETAI.

Ditza Verter was born in Tel Aviv and raised in New York. She holds a BA in applied linguistics from Queens College, New York and an MA from the Center for Applied Language Studies, University of Reading. She

has been teaching English in Israel for 37 years and is presently the English coordinator at Ohr Torah Stone Boys Yeshivah and High School in Jerusalem. Ditza has written nine textbooks.

Eleanor Zwebner is originally from Forest Hills, New York. She holds a B.A. and teacher's certification from Queens College of the City University of New York and an M.A. in English Literature from Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She has been teaching English in Israel since 1972 and currently works at the Masorti Braunschvig High School, Jerusalem, grades 7-12 where she was Assistant Principal of the Masorti High School from 1997-2004. Eleanor was a member of the "National Committee for Teaching of Native Speakers" that formulated a syllabus for the teaching of native speakers of English and guidelines for these classes. As part of her work with the committee, she wrote the NEWSCOOP monthly magazine (edited by Raquelle Azran and Jennifer Elmaliyah) for teachers of native English speaking pupils. Even though she has been outspoken about her opposition to the HOTS program as it currently exists, Eleanor is constantly seeking ways to improve and invigorate her teaching.

WHY I LOVE THE HOTS-LITERATURE PROGRAM AND WHY MY STUDENTS DO TOO!

Aviva Shapiro (shapiroaviva@gmail.com)

In the hope that some of you will rethink the effectiveness of the HOTS Literature program, I'd like to share my experiences and the reactions of my students. Why? Last year I asked my five-point 10th grade students if they would be willing to hand in a log for module F instead of taking the regular Module F test this year. Since I had taken part in the pilot program, I was allowed to teach the new program and have my students hand in a literature log this year. I explained to my students that this meant focusing on literature and HOTS and that the final log would replace the external module F exam. I also explained that throughout the process they could revise their work and that the final grade would be awarded based on specific criteria.

The majority of my students voted to do the log; those who did not want to do it could have transferred to another class but nobody did. I chose the literary pieces that were meaningful to me, submitted my choices for approval and began teaching. Throughout the teaching process, there were a few hiccups like lost work and an occasional misunderstanding of the HOTS, but as we progressed the students began to show understand the HOTS and

apply them to both the literary pieces and their lives. We also had a lot of fun in the brief 10 minute slots devoted to explicitly teaching the HOTS before we moved on to reading and analyzing the literary piece at hand. I used a variety of activities during the lessons such as watching YouTube clips or a movie, doing role plays and holding animated class discussions. My pupils also wrote a great deal focusing on different writing skills they needed to practice. As we studied the literary pieces, I encouraged the pupils to continually revise their written work.

The most successful piece of literature studied, according to the pupils, was the book "Night" by Eli Wiesel. Many kids claimed that it was an experience they will never forget. We read the entire novel in class and worked on it using the different components required by the program. My students all felt that the novel had enriched their lives. Although it took almost three months focusing only on teaching the book, during this time we were engaged in so many different activities, the pupils progressed tremendously in all aspects of English.

Furthermore, I felt the interest and excitement of the pupils during the entire two years of implementing

the program. I also witnessed their progress and their great pride when finally on May 10th, 2010, the pupils submitted their completed logs so I could calculate the final grades, to be sent in on the day of the Bagrut. Since I had marked their work as I taught each unit, there was already a final grade for each unit. All that was left for me to do was to read their introductions final reflection, I requested but is not obligatory, and compute the final grade. The final grades ranged from 80 to 100 based on the grades achieved during the two years of study.

The students handed in beautiful logs, collections of all their literature work, and were all incredibly pleased with their final product. Only one boy wrote that he had not enjoyed keeping all the work for the log but had enjoyed the learning process. It had been a chore for him to save his work and be organized, although he did admit that he had found all the work in the end and was "kind of proud of himself!"

My students' words illustrate what this program can really accomplish! I required my students to write an introduction to their log and requested that they write a final reflection. I didn't tell them what to write so I was actually very moved when I read their introductions and reflections. I am extremely proud of them and touched by their words. I hope you will be too.

"Looking back at everything now, I see how much I have actually gained. I was shocked to see how much work I've gone through and seeing everything in a neat, organized file really did open my eyes to see the importance of every piece of work that I have done. ... I think I have learned more this year in English than I have in any other subject and not only did my skills improve and my vocabulary get enriched but I've gotten to learn every day skills that will help me out in life through the HOTS and the LOTS. ... I really enjoyed learning everything we've done and I would definitely do it all over again." **Shelly**

"Over all when I look back and my English file and I see all my work organized neatly, I realize and understand that the past two years of my English studies have helped me in many different ways other than just in academic ways. I have learned skills which will help me later on in life. I appreciate all my work I have done." **Leah**

"Now that I have done the project I feel that it took my English to a whole new level. I think that I accomplished allot (sic) this year and I know that I will remember my 11th grade in English for the best." **Gavriel**

"Since I heard that our "F" bagrut will be a Log I was

very happy. First of all, I found it more interesting than doing another test, but also, learning all the poems, stories and HOTS actually made me think better in English, which I think is great." **Shvo**

"In my opinion this kind of Log must be done. I had a wonderful time doing it and I think I learned a lot of new things and more important about myself (sic) that I succeeded although I had difficulties along the way." **Shaked**

"I have enjoyed learning English this way. I have improved my vocabulary and grammar, but more importantly- my general knowledge. I believe literature exposes you to another point of view and helps you become a better person. I think English should be always taught like this!" **Gal**

"For me this LOG was very important because the process didn't make me nervous at all, and I think it affected my grade because I was more relaxed. Also, it was very enjoyable. It was learning in a different way in some parts in the different activities. Plus, I think I gained, learned, and improved my English much more and in more ways than I would have if we were doing the regular module F." **Inbar**

I have tried to show a sample from both boys and girls in order to illustrate that both genders like the program and feel that they learned.

Although this class of 25 was not a typical class, it did include LD students and weaker (Mabar) pupils who wanted to be part of the "adventure". I am now teaching a 10th grade class which is not quite as strong but they too like the concept and are cooperative participants!

Even if this program were to be canceled, I would continue teaching this way. Since I feel that alternative assessment is a much truer way to assess pupils, this is a wonderful way for me to teach and evaluate all pupils fairly and effectively. In my view, it is also an authentic and interesting way of language teaching.

Note: This is based on an article that appears on the ETNI site and has been printed with permission.

Aviva Lana Shapiro is a teacher and coordinator at the Beit Yerach Comprehensive High School in the Jordan Valley. She is also a REED (Rural English Education Department) counsellor in the North. She has a BSc from the University of Maryland, USA and an MBA from Leicester University, England. She is the mother of five and lives in a "Yishuv Kehilati" near the Kinneret.

MY TAKE ON THE NEW LITERATURE PROGRAM

Rivka Lewenstein (rlewen@yahoo.com)

After reading many pro-HOTS and anti-HOTS posts (mostly anti, I must admit) on ETNI, and listening to lots of teachers' opinions about the new literature program, I feel that it is time to present my own view.

Over the last two years, and after taking the course, I've done a lot of thinking about the new literature program and what it meant to me as both a teacher and publisher, and textbook writer. So far it's been a thought-provoking and enjoyable journey, and the main conclusion I've reached about the program is as follows:

It's just that – a program. It's up to you to decide how to implement it. You have the power to turn it into your dream program, but you also have the power to turn it into your worst teaching nightmare. Let me explain.

There are several issues – OK, more than several – that have teachers concerned about the program. I'm not going to say that none of the issues are valid – I'll get to those in a minute – but a lot really are a question of attitude.

Teaching literature altogether. Everyone is supposed to have taught literature all along. I know that the majority of the teachers in Jerusalem have always taught literature, and while I don't want to speak for other parts of the country, I know that not all schools have done so. If you haven't, then yes, beginning to teach literature now may seem intimidating. But that's not the program's fault. Teaching literature has always been a requirement.

The pieces of literature. I feel very strongly that teachers MUST love the pieces of literature that they teach their students. Therefore, it was clear to me that I would choose the log option so I could pick the pieces that I like. I really hope that teachers who have decided to prepare their students for the exam like the pieces that have been chosen for the exam. For the log, yes, I had to give up one or two stories that I'd been teaching because they didn't fit the criteria for choosing pieces. However, I found some other great pieces instead.

The rigidity of the program. Personally, I like structure, so this was not a problem for me. I can understand, however, that some will find it annoying to make sure that every key component is covered for every piece they teach. But honestly, I find that this has very much enhanced the way I teach literature. Take Bridging Text and Context, for example. I've always taught some background information with each piece of literature that I've brought to my students, and I'm sure that all of you have done the same. However, since Bridging Text

and Context is now one of the seven key components, so I dug even deeper to find more background information that would enhance students' understanding of each piece. The results have been incredible! I myself have been amazed by some of what I've uncovered, and it's made teaching the pieces so much better. The only component that I'm really not thrilled about is the reflection – although I understand its purpose, I think that it gets boring after the first two or three times. But then again, this program is being done over three years, so getting two or three reflections out of my students every year is not that big a deal, I think.

Furthermore, there is nothing to stop you from doing things that are NOT required by the program. For example, I've included sections in my units where students give their opinions about issues that appear in the text. This is besides the seven key components, but it makes the text so much richer, so why not? And it gives students a lot to discuss / write about in English. In other words, don't feel that you are restricted to the seven key components outlined in the program.

The HOTS. Yes, that acronym which makes everyone either cringe or cheer. I was also skeptical about explicitly teaching the HOTS. Once again, though, I think that a lot has to do with teaching the HOTS in a way that suits your teaching style. I'm more of an analytical person. So I will go with a slightly more analytical approach that doesn't preclude teaching the HOTS memorably. You have to choose the style that suits you best. Moreover, I've come to the conclusion that even if you think that there is no point whatsoever to explicitly teaching the HOTS, it still doesn't have to be viewed as a total waste of classroom time. You can have the students sharpen their English skills while working on HOTS, and just look at it as a "shiur lo min haminyan" (because yes, it can be fun, and in English, yet!) instead of as a waste of time.

The work for teachers. I agree that this is a big issue. Of course, beginning any new program requires a lot of preparation, and I honestly think that English teachers are the most overworked teachers in Israel. If you're not using one of the new literature books coming out, then it's especially difficult. Even if you do, you will still have to check a lot of papers, regardless of whether you are preparing for the log or the exam. And that is a big deal. Yes, if you're doing the log you might be paid a small amount for checking it, but it's really a pittance compared to the work being put in. And yes, you might

be checking these instead of checking Module D / F practice unseen and compositions, but it's still a lot of work. No argument from me there.

Class time spent. Again, I **do** think that you will spend more time on literature than you did in the past, even if until now you have taught all the required literature. Now you must incorporate all seven key components, including HOTS. Again, this is not a problem I can solve. (I wish!) However, I do think that the main solution is to reduce work spent on other areas. For example, you may need to spend a lot less time on your coursebook, or even stretch a coursebook out over two years. I don't think that your students will lose out at all since a well-planned literature program should have everything a coursebook contains (except perhaps grammar), and more. If you do want to continue doing everything you've done till now plus the literature program, then yes, you will have a problem.

I honestly think that if an extra hour of class time were added to our teaching schedule for each 10th–12th grade 4- and 5-point class, and teachers got paid for two extra teaching hours for each such class, the Ministry would solve 85% of the issues teachers are facing with the program. (The other issues include LD kids—which I know they are working on—and others which I honestly don't

think can be solved, such as the lack of standardization with the log.) If the log option is taken away, I and many other teachers will be quite miserable! However, I don't have great hopes for imminent solutions to these issuers. So yes, I certainly do understand teachers who want to continue fighting for changes in the program—especially for additional class hours and additional pay. But after spending so much time working with the new program, I strongly feel that just bashing the whole program is wrong. No, it's not perfect, but then again, what program is?

And yes, I do hold a vested interest, but I'd like to think that I am intellectually honest enough to see things as they are. And I really do see this program, at least the way I've interpreted it, as being a boon to my teaching. I hope that after a year of implementing the program, you will be able to say the same.

Note: This article is based on a message originally posted to the ETNI discussion list.

Rivka Lewenstein is a teacher at Beit Ulpana in Jerusalem and a teacher trainer. In 2004, she founded A.E.L. Publications, which has published well over 20 books, including several that she has written. Her most recent textbook is for the Literature Program and is being evaluated for MOE approval.



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IMPLEMENTING DEBATING AND PUBLIC SPEAKING IN ISRAELI HIGH SCHOOLS: "WE ARE ON THE MAP!"

Bronia Kabakovitch (*genady_b@bezeqint.net*) and Yoni Cohen-Idov

At some point in our lives, public speaking is required of all of us. It may be in a social, political or business setting. In the business world, an especially good presentation can make or break a career, and in a relationship the ability to listen on one hand and get your message across flawlessly on the other, can mean many years of happiness. The more specialized form of public speaking, debating, affords us skills and tools to accurately express our thoughts and convey a solid, convincing message; listen effectively to each other and see both sides of an argument. Those who study these forms of rhetoric learn to logically build and refute arguments, develop their organizational skills and teamwork, develop critical thinking, self-esteem and self-confidence, and of course, improve their English language skills. Pluralism and tolerance of different ideas are also essential values instilled at the debating sessions. Ability to debate is a real life skill which brings authentic English into the English classroom, and provides the students both the way and the will to express themselves orally in English.

In a seeming contradiction to its enormous benefits, debating in the classroom is quite simple. Two teams engage in a contest of reason and logic, in which they debate a chosen topic. One side presents arguments for the topic, and the other side argues against the topic. The debate is watched by a panel of judges who listen to the arguments presented by both sides and award victory to one of the teams based on quality of argumentation and presentation.

The following is an example of the basic syllabus, which could be further developed to cater to the needs of learners, both teachers and students:

- Introduction to effective public speaking: different targeted audiences of public speaking; Introduction to the Structure of Speech;
- Style: body language, voice projection, eye contact, gestures as auxiliary tool to verbal communication
- Structure of an argument; logic chains; Statements, explanations, examples and conclusions.
- Fostering skills of debating in the classroom
- Building a Persuasive Speech; Impromptu Speaking; Speech Writing
- Critical thinking; Constructive feedback; assessment of arguments
- General knowledge; International relations; Principles of democracy; bioethics; environment; Research skills

Siah vaSig – The Israel Debating Society – regularly hosts week long Summer Debate Workshops in English in Jerusalem and in Lod at the Aleh Lod High School for Sciences, over a period of twelve days in July. These workshops serve to introduce high school students to the world of debating and are the catalyst for our weekly club meetings which take place at different school venues throughout the year. The workshops are run by the best Israeli debaters, usually former World Schools debaters and current World University debaters, and British coaches from the Oxford Teachers' Union.

During the past few years it has been proven that where Israeli politicians fail, Israeli debaters triumph. Israel is considered a true power to be reckoned with in international debating competitions, at both the high school and university levels, and Israeli debaters serve as superb ambassadors of the State and its people. The Israeli high school teams, sent abroad by Siah vaSig, have achieved impressive results in the last decade, winning the European championship (2003) and coming third (in 2006 and in 2000), 6th (2008) and 9th (2010) in the World Schools Debating Championship, winning the Heart of Europe tournament (2008) and successfully participating (the first place in mixed teams in Bulgaria, and the 3rd-in Romania) in the seven Youth Forums of the IDEA (International Debating Educational Association) and Asper Tournarment, Canada (best EFL team and speakers). This year, four teams will represent Israel's Siach vaSig and Aleh Lod Debating Club at the IDEA Youth Forum in the Netherlands, led by coaches of the first category Barak Carmieli and Yasaf Volinsky. Tom Zavilyansky, an IDEA veteran who took the 8th place in the after dinner category in the World Individual Public Speaking event in 2008 is also participating. The national coach is Yoni Cohen-Idov, who won the title of World Champion in the category of English-as-a-Second-Language in the World Universities Debating Championship 2010 representing Tel Aviv University, and was the Runner Up and Best Speaker of the European Universities Debating Championship in 2009.

Aside from winning titles and earning the professional respect of their peers, Israeli debaters have been a true beacon for hope and peace, being of the few Israelis to regularly meet with counterparts from Arab and Muslim nations. Young high school students from Kuwait, Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia and Qatar regularly go out to have fun with the Israelis during free time in international tournaments, and debate each other

regularly. Team Israel was invited to enter with their Israeli passports to Qatar at the World Schools' Debating Championship 2010 held in Doha, and was greeted warmly by the local students. Yoni Cohen-Idov won his World Champion title of 2010 in Turkey, and was cheered on by friends from Qatar and Iraq, among others.

Taking an even more proactive part in promoting the Israeli cause internationally, Siah vaSig has involved Israeli youngsters in the full calendar month Friends of Israel Foundation program of talking to High School students and other audiences in the major cities of Great Britain. In our experience these young ambassadors proved the most terrific representatives of the State. In many instances they conveyed a flavor of Israel far more effectively than many official "voices".

So, where do we go from here and now? Setting up debating clubs and programs in many schools/ community centers or incorporating debating classes as part of your extra-curricular activities will only benefit Israeli students' cognitive and language abilities, will expand their knowledge about the world, and will

educate them as better citizens. Our coaches are ready to provide guidance and assistance to those educators who take responsibility for organizing the program. Another option for educators is to take an in-service course for English teachers organized by Siah Vasig; this year is the eighth course being given. A debate program is also a great addition to the syllabus for native speakers. In our program, we start from the 7th grade at all language levels, even though it means mixing in Hebrew at the beginning, and continue through the 12th grade. The benefit for students is three-fold, social, cognitive and academic, and it is truly substantial! We hope you'll consider becoming part of this successful and important endeavor.

Yoni Cohen-Idov is the National Coach for the Israeli High School Team, Worlds Debating Championship. Bronia Kabakovitch is the SiachvaSig Debating Coordinator and the English Chair at the Aleh Lod High School for Sciences.

SHARING AND HEARING AT ACHVA

Michele Ben (mgben@gmail.com)

On Tuesday, May 25th 2010, the English Department of Achva College of Education held a study day in memory of Dr. Carol Efrati featuring students' and graduates' presentations. Since Achva College borders on both the southern and central regions, the opening talks were given by Dr. Miriam Kluska, English Inspector for the Central Region and Patti Asor, on behalf of Dr. Shirley Burg, English Inspector for the Southern Region. Michele Ben then spoke about ETAI and the importance of belonging to and participating in a professional organization to a teacher's work and status as a professional.

Before the first session of presentations began, students displayed and discussed posters and poems they had created based on literature lessons. Students and attendees then filed into two rooms to hear varied and stimulating presentations given by students and graduates based on their field work, research and professional experience. A second session of presentations followed the lunch break. A total of 13 students and graduates gave excellent presentations with titles such as "Verbal Violence in the Classroom," "A 'Pupil Notebook' for special-need pupils in EFL", "Beginning Teacher's Survival Kit," and "Mutual Reflection – The Happiness Tool" among many

others.

We hope that those who presented at this highly successful study day will present at an ETAI conference so many more teachers will have the opportunity to benefit from their ideas and knowledge.

The study day was organized by Dr. Barbara Kolan with the help of the English department staff at Achva College.

Dr. Carol Efrati: In Memoriam

Trudy Zukerman (trudy@vms.huji.ac.il)

Dr. Carol Efrati (1940-2010) was a founding member of the English Department at Achva Academic College of Education. We were all saddened and shocked by the news of her death on May 20. Except for her amputated leg, Carol was in relatively good health. She was a loyal and conscientious member of the English department at Achva. Her students remember her well. Many were inspired by her teaching and loved her literature classes. They appreciated her encyclopedic knowledge of literature, her passion for it and her deep caring for each one of her students. She left a lasting impression on all of us.

ATTENDING A TESOL CONVENTION – AN AMAZING EXPERIENCE BOSTON, MARCH 2010

Naomi Ganin-Epstein (naomiepstein@yahoo.co.uk)

During the fall of 2009, as a member of TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages), I applied for the Betty Azar “Professional Development Travel Grant”. On January First I got the exciting news – I had been awarded the grant and would be traveling to Boston to attend my first TESOL Convention!

Betty Azar said that when she attended her first TESOL conference thirty years ago, she felt like a kid in a candy store. My first reaction to the convention was totally different. I felt overwhelmed and missed our ETAI conferences. At ETAI I’m not one of 8,000 people (I’m not kidding, I checked with registration!), everyone refers to a curriculum I’m familiar with and uses acronyms I understand. In addition, the size of the program isn’t that of a phone book and the book fair doesn’t seem to fill a football field!

However, my sprits rose quickly. First of all, **everyone** was incredibly friendly. I had the most fascinating conversations with teachers from diverse places. Some of the issues they are dealing with are different from ours and others are just the same! I scrapped my original plan of which sessions to attend and joined more experienced teachers who had recommendations regarding good speakers. Some sessions gave practical “try this in your classroom” suggestions such as which vocabulary items to put up on the “word wall” in your classroom. Other sessions related to more general aspects of the teaching experience. Since I was commuting from a Boston suburb, on the train ride every evening I found myself reviewing the sessions I had attended. I discovered that, while some things discussed wouldn’t work in my classroom in the manner the speaker had described, thinking about these issues helped me formulate new ideas about what **would** work instead.

But the convention was about more than sessions and lectures. I had known beforehand that TESOL has SIGS (special interest groups) but hadn’t joined one as none seemed relevant to me. At one of the lectures I discovered that there **was** one I should join and am now getting to know the people involved and the issues discussed through their email list.

I went through the book fair in sections, a bit at a time. Luckily for me, a friend from ETAI was there to point out a stand I would otherwise have overlooked – ASCD. They have fascinating publications related to teaching in general, the day-to day issues of being a teacher who works with children, written in an accessible manner. When I returned home I made an appointment with our school principal and told him about the convention and pointed out that we don’t have any self-development books for teachers at our school. He agreed to order one for us!

The convention ended two months ago and I’m still thinking about it. I’ve attended a fascinating webinar (online lecture) while sitting comfortably at home with a hot drink, received interesting material in the mail and corresponded with people I met. Oh, and the book the principal agreed to buy has just arrived! I truly feel that attending the TESOL convention was just the first step of an eye-opening experience!

Naomi Epstein teaches English to deaf and hard of hearing students at Yehud Comprehensive High-School, is the “Shema” national counselor for English for the hearing impaired and has been in this field for over twenty years. She holds a B.A. in “Education of the Hearing Impaired”, a B.E.D in “Teaching EFL” and an M.A. in “Curriculum Development” and is the author of “Apples and Zebras” and “The Book of Keys”

TXTNG : THEGR8 DB8

By David Crystal

Oxford University Press, 2009

A BOOK REVIEW by David L. Young (dlwhy04@yahoo.com)

As an experienced English teacher, what grades would you give the following piece of writing?

My smmr hols wrCWOT.B4 we used 2go2 NY 2C my bro, his GF & thr3 :-@ kids FTF, ILNY, it's a gr8 plc.

Or for this heartfelt poetic cry about technology and communication?

shud I charge the battery
in case its lost its power?
no ones txtd me 4 yonx
it must b ½ an hour!

The above are examples of texting – a written language now widely used on cell phones as well as on many other electronic devices. As David Crystal writes in *Textng: The Gr8Db8*, this language has also been labeled ‘textese’, ‘slanguage’, a ‘new hi-tech lingo’, a ‘hybrid shorthand’ and a ‘digital virus.’ He also notes that it has been described as ‘foreign’, ‘alien’ and ‘outlandish’ and that texters have been called ‘bilingual’ and that ‘Texting is penmanship for illiterates.’

But do you need to be especially literate to send messages as:

what R U sayin?
c u in 5 min x
U miss me? ;)
wht tim does th trn gt in?

Although texting seems to be a new form of writing English, is this really so? The answer is no, and the author goes to great lengths to prove that we have been sending shortened forms of English (and other languages) for hundreds and even for thousands of years.

The ancient Babylonians and Egyptians wrote abbreviations 5,000 years ago using over 2,000 hieroglyphic characters. And this system was used not only for writing; it was also used for counting, for fractions and for mathematics.

Crystal notes that despite the time gap between these ancient civilizations and today, hieroglyphics and texting are both forms of a *rebus* – a message consisting of pictures which represent the sounds of words rather than the objects they refer to. For example, a picture of a bee can be read in English as either *bee* or *be*.

These rebuses themselves have an ancient history. The word comes from the Latin tag *non verbis sed rebus* – ‘not with words but with things’. This concept was used

in European art and literature. Leonardo da Vinci drew rebus puzzles and Ben Jonson, Shakespeare’s fellow-playwright, mocked them in one of his plays. Later Lewis Carroll, of *Alice in Wonderland* fame, included rebuses in his letters to children. More recent examples of this abbreviated form of writing was probably used by many of us when as school children we proudly wrote the following in our friends’ autograph albums:

2YYUR
2YYUB
ICUR
2YY4me!

The above examples of shortening words into letters and/or pictures are just one form of ancient to modern texting. Another form is based only on the use of capital letters such as BBC, UK and USA. While these and many other initialisms were well-used before the advent of cell-phones, the ranks of these abbreviations has greatly expanded in the recent past to include such gems as: BTW (by the way), CWOT (complete waste of time), YYSSW (yeah, yeah, sure, sure, whatever) and TTUTT (to tell you the truth).

But even this form of English has ancient roots, though not as ancient as the Egyptian and Babylonian ones referred to earlier. Crystal cites: IOU – first used in 1618; p.m (*post-meridiem*) – noted in 1666; and n.b. (*nota bene*) – whose use was recorded seven years later. RIP (*Requiescat in pace – Rest in Peace*) dates from the 19th century and one hundred years later we read about or even used such initialisms as AWOL (absent without leave), NBG (no bloody good) and SWALK (sent/sealed with a loving kiss).

The last century brought us such aeronautical examples as ETA & ETD (estimated time of arrival / departure) and JFK LHR and TLV for the airports in New York, London and Tel-Aviv. Journalists regularly used aka and a favourite Cockney expression was TTFN (ta-ta for now). Today some of these initialisms, also known as acronyms, are so well-used that people forget what the letters actually stand for. Do you know what the words that RADAR, SCUBA, DVD, PVC, BSE (mad cow disease) and AIDS represent?

In contrast to initializing some words, other words are shortened by contracting them (removing letters from the middle) such as fwd (forward), btwn (between) and evng (evening). Another method of reducing word length

is called *clipping*, where the final letters are removed as in *messin*, *comin* and *englis*.

Crystal also refers to non-standard spelling as a way of shortening words and the following examples will be well-known to us via our pupils: *cos, luv, fone, scool / skool, sum, wanna, gonna, dunno* and *wot*.

BTW, this last form of spelling was taken to a new peak by Geoffrey Willans and Ronald Searle in 1954 when they recorded the annals of Nigel Molesworth in *How to be Topp*. In this book, one of our hero's classmates writes the following letter home:

*Darling mama, darling papa,
i mis you very much. i am lonely. Plees kiss my
gollywog. never did I appreciate so much the joys
and comforts of home life. To think that I was rud
to granddad that I scremed when I was told to hav
a bath. And how many times hav I refused to come
in and go to bed.o woe. Kiss my gollywog agane.
Yours fathefuly
Binkie
nb you had better kis granddad too. Or not. As you
please.*

While the above may strike us as a somewhat exaggerated example, Crystal notes that several 'non-standard' spellings have become so much a part of the literary tradition, that words such as *sorta*, *wassup*, *wiv* and *wotcha* now all appear in the Oxford English Dictionary.

But texting, in all its variations, is not just a basic form of spelling. It has expanded and developed to become much more sophisticated as time and technology have marched on. Look at these examples:

*:-) happy
:-)) very happy
:-))) very very happy
:-)))) ecstatic*

*iowan2bwu - I only want to be with you
ijc2sailuvu - I just called to say I love you*

*IMHO - in my humble opinion
IMCO - in my considered opinion
IMHBCO - in my humble but correct opinion
IMNSHO - in my not so humble opinion*

So now we know a bit about the history of texting and its variations, the next question is: Who actually does text messaging? Is it just the spotty-faced kid chewing gum at the back of the class? His girl-friend or the generic 'man-in-the-street'?

Although David Crystal and Richard Ling, a Norwegian researcher, confirm conventional wisdom and say that

texting is a 'teenage thing', they also claim that there are major differences how the two sexes, both young and old, compose their text messages. Women tend to send longer messages which are grammatically more complex. They use more abbreviations and emoticons (☺) and are more likely than men to retain the traditional conventions of orthography – punctuation, capitalization and spelling. Women also use more salutations and farewells. In other words, to quote Richard Ling, female texters are more 'literary.'

And what do people text about? Some people use this form of communication for social reasons: messages of support, sympathy, 'misin U,' 'gt wl soon' etc., while others send birthday, religious day or special day greetings. David Crystal notes that on New Year's Day 2007 a record 214 million text messages were sent!

Another major use of texting is informational, i.e. people planning and co-ordinating their lives, arranging or canceling meetings, or *hass v'halilah!* kids helping each other out during exams! Institutes and places of work also keep their employees up-to-date about various changes through short pithy messages and some organizations today alert their users on their mailing-lists about the weather, travel conditions, sporting fixtures etc. These cell-phone messages may be seen as a more convenient alternative to e-mailing information. In the U.K. the local authorities in Liverpool and Sheffield have begun to alert their subscribers about all kinds of occurrences in these areas such as floods, traffic holdups and even rubbish collections.

Crystal also quotes examples from China and the Netherlands where 'neighbourhood watch' experiments have taken place and where the police have used SMS messages to alert local people about missing children and burglaries.

Another 'institutional' form of texting is when political parties and social groups have called members out to attend rallies; Crystal quotes how Hillary Clinton contacted thousands of her supporters during her bid to run for the American presidency two years ago.

In the last part of *Txtng: The Gr8 Db8*, the author devotes a chapter on "How do Other Languages Do It?" along with an appendix on text abbreviations in eleven other languages. All of these languages use the Latin alphabet and so unfortunately Hebrew does not appear.

And now for the 'moral' question: Is texting good or bad for us, or indeed, for anyone else? In Chapter 8, Crystal quotes the anti-texters who claim that texting will erode children's ability to spell, punctuate and capitalize correctly and that these 'skills' will badly influence the

rest of their schoolwork. Pupils' exam grades will suffer and a new generation of adults will inevitably grow up unable to write proper English. Ultimately this will lead to the situation where the language as a whole will decline.

Crystal says there is no clear evidence to support the above but he does quote three recent studies carried out in London, Coventry (UK) and Finland which show "The more text abbreviation [children] used in their messages, the higher they scored on tests of reading and vocabulary."

And after all this, is David Crystal (who you may quiz on this subject at this summer's International Conference) for or against texting? He concludes this fascinating book thus:

Some people dislike texting. Some are bemused by it. Some love it. I am fascinated by it, for it is the latest manifestation of the human ability to be linguistically creative and to adopt language to suit the demands of diverse settings. In texting we are seeing, in a small way, language in evolution.

Finally, if all else fails, when it comes to marking young Yossi's or Yael's homework assignment, remember that the greatest writer in the English language also wrote text messages. Even though he did not have the benefit of the latest electronic and technological devices, he still managed to write "2B or not 2B."

David L. Young luvs th Eng lang & hs bn teachin it 4 many many yrs. 2day he teaches in Jlem and hs wrten 5 hist novels.aamof, th last 1 about Christopher Marlowe is due out v soon.

OF GUNS AND MULES
By David Lawrence-Young
 Gefen Publishing House, 2010
 A BOOK REVIEW by Marna Snyder (etaioffice@gmail.com)

If the author's name looks familiar, you're right! David Lawrence-Young, aka David Young, serves as the ETAI treasurer, writes book reviews for the ETAI Forum and has given presentations at many ETAI conferences. When he is not teaching at the Israel Academy of Science & Arts, Jerusalem, he writes historical fiction.

Of Guns and Mules is David's fourth historical novel, and it takes place in Palestine during World War I and during the aftermath of the war. The main character is a young man named David Levi, an eighteen-year-old who is finishing his high school studies when the book begins in 1914. He and his family are living in Tel Aviv when one morning, David and his father are suddenly picked up by three Turkish policemen, and shortly thereafter they are deported to Egypt, together with a boatload of their Jewish friends.

Speculation was rife about where they were going and why, until they arrive at a British army camp just outside Cairo. Here the men meet two prominent Russian Jewish military leaders, Captain Joseph Trumpeldor and Lieutenant Ze'ev Jabotinsky. Their commanding officer is Lt. Colonel John Henry Patterson, and they plan to form a Jewish military unit to help the British oust the Turks from Palestine. There are a number of serious obstacles to be overcome to implement the plan: first of all, the men, who have no previous combat experience, need to be trained; secondly, the well-entrenched Turkish forces in Gallipoli, which control the passageway to the

Dardanelles, need to be defeated; and thirdly, a successful way to rid Palestine of Turkish rule needs to be found.

According to historical fact, the Zion Mule Corps was formed as a service brigade in the British Army, and one of the most vivid chapters in *Of Guns and Mules* deals with the eight months spent fighting in Gallipoli. David Levi and his fellow soldiers get their first taste of battle there, and some of their comrades are tragically killed in action.

This book, based on actual historical events, could be used as a class reader for native speakers of English, and would appeal to adolescents, since the hero is their age and going through similar personal upheavals. When David Levi goes to war, he leaves behind his childhood girlfriend, Yehudit, and the two of them exchange letters. This relationship could appeal to both female and male readers.

Of Guns and Mules is an easy book to read, and it's the only novel dealing with this period in Jewish history. The Zion Mule Corps, and later the Jewish Legion, were the forerunners of the Haganah and the IDF. Those who wish to read more about our country's history in a fictionalized version need only to wait for David Young's next book, a sequel, entitled, *Of Guns, Revenge and Hope*, to come out sometime in 2011.



NEW COMIC SUPERHERO

Lesson from www.teachingenglish.org.uk

The leading American comic book publisher, Marvel Comics, is starting a new comic book, which it hopes will become as popular as its classics, "Spiderman", "Superman" and "The Incredible Hulk". But in this comic book the heroes will be ordinary New York police, firefighters and paramedics.

This reading/listening lesson takes a look at the new superheroes of our time. For more information about the story which is the basis of this plan, visit the BBC News website: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/arts/1605200.stm>

For the lesson plan and audio to accompany this lesson please go to:

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/try/lesson-plans/new-superheroes> for extension activities or activities for elementary or junior high school students around the topic of superheroes. The materials include an interactive game called 'Style a Hero', as well as activities based on famous superheroes such as 'Superman', 'Catwoman' and other popular figures. Take a look at this page to find tips for using and exploiting the materials in the classroom:

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/try/teaching-kids/superheroes>

British Council Israel (learnenglish@britishcouncil.org.il)

New comic superhero – Lesson plan - © BBC | British Council 2002

Worksheet A

Reading 1

Read the summary of the main article.

1. What is different about these new superheroes?

New comic Superhero – summary

The leading American comic book publisher, Marvel Comics, is starting a new comic book, which it hopes will become as popular as its classics, "Spiderman", "Superman" and "The Incredible Hulk". But in this comic book the heroes will be ordinary New York police, firefighters and paramedics.

Reading / Listening 2

2. Read or listen to the main article. Answer these questions.
 - a. What nicknames do the police and firefighters have?
 - b. In the first issue, what two things do the firefighters do?
 - c. Are these superheroes completely ordinary?
 - d. Do the publishers think the comics will be a success?
 - e. Where did the idea for these superheroes come from?
 - f. What is the possible criticism of the publishers?
 - g. What do you think, is it a good idea?

New comic superhero – Lesson plan - © BBC | British Council 2002

Worksheet A continued.

Text

Jane Standley, BBC

It's a case of **move over** Spiderman and The Incredible Hulk - here come New York's **finest**. That's how its police officers are known; its firefighters are called the bravest. Their first adventures, along with the **exploits** of a female

paramedic, are being sent out to the three-million **subscribers** to other, more traditional Marvel comics and will now also be in the shops.

The first issue - "The Call of Duty: The Brotherhood" - focuses on firefighters, who respond to all kinds of emergencies, small and large, around the city. But they're always **hot on the heels of** evil-doers too who want **to wrong** New Yorkers. And, because the comic strips take place in superhero land, there are hints of the **super-human**.

Marvel comics think they have hit on a best seller and a new cultural trend. New York's emergency personnel, especially its firefighters, have become **revered** for the way in which they responded to the attacks on the city on September the eleventh. Four-hundred-and three of them were killed. The publishers say they are not **cashing in**, just treating the emergency services with the respect they deserve. But this being America, there will of course be toys and videos as **spin-offs** of the new superhero series.

New comic superhero – Lesson plan - © BBC | British Council 2002

Worksheet B

Vocabulary

Match the words on the left with the definitions on the right.
Use the text to help you.

move over	new products which are based on an existing idea
finest	people who pay to receive a publication regularly
exploits	bravest or best people
subscribers	beyond the powers of ordinary people
hot on the heels of	brave actions
to wrong	greatly respected
super-human	chasing
revered	making money from the situation
cashing in	no longer big news
spin-offs	to treat badly

New comic superhero – Lesson plan - © BBC | British Council 2002

Worksheet C

Follow up – Writing

Create a new super hero.

Write a description of a new superhero. Use these questions to help you plan your writing.

How old would they be?

Would they be male or female?

What special powers could they have?

How did they come to get these special powers?

Do they have a special costume?

In their ordinary life, what would their job be?

Would they have a family?

Who would their main enemy be?

New comic superhero – Lesson plan - © BBC | British Council 2002

Worksheet D

Reading – 1a

Put the following sections in the correct order to build the text. There are three paragraphs.

1 ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ 5 ____ 6 ____ 7 ____ 8 ____

A

just treating the emergency services with the respect they deserve. But this being America, there will of course be toys and videos as spin-offs of the new superhero series.

B

attacks on the city on September the eleventh. Four-hundred-and three of them were killed. The publishers say they are not cashing in,

C

It's a case of move over Spiderman and The Incredible Hulk - here come New York's finest. That's how its police officers are known; its firefighters are called the bravest. Their first adventures, along with

D

around the city. But they're always hot on the heels of evil-doers too who want to wrong New Yorkers. And, because the comic strips take

E

The first issue - "The Call of Duty: The Brotherhood" - focuses on firefighters, who respond to all kinds of emergencies, small and large,

F

the exploits of a female paramedic, are being sent out to the three-million subscribers to other, more traditional Marvel comics and will now also be in the shops.

G

place in superhero land, there are hints of the super-human.

H

Marvel comics think they have hit on a best seller and a new cultural trend. New

York's emergency personnel, especially its firefighters, have become revered for the way in which they responded to the



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SEE YA AT SEETA!

Michele Ben (mgbben@gmail.com)

It's SEETA's second birthday and you're invited to the party! You may ask, who is SEETA and why am I invited? Well actually, you should ask **what** is SEETA? SEETA is South Eastern Europe Teachers' Associations. You are invited because you are a member of ETAI and ETAI is a member of SEETA along with teachers' associations in Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Northern Greece (the founding member), Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Turkey. Since you now know who's attending, you must ask: Where's the party? It's at <http://www.seeta.eu/>!

When you go to SEETA, you'll be welcomed by the following message: "Welcome to the SEETA Community, a collaborative on-line community of eleven Teachers' Associations in SE Europe run by volunteers." And, true to the nature of a party, SEETA is chock full of goodies. Every month or two, there is a discussion focusing on an issue relevant to EFL teachers in most contexts lead by well known educators in the field. The first discussion called "Using L1 (mother tongue) in English Lessons" took place in September 2008, and was led by Penny Ur. Some other topics that were discussed are motivation, technology use (or not), humour, intercultural education and classroom management among others. One especially practical event was presented by Nick Peachy called "Easy Web 2.0 tools that you can use inside and outside your classroom." So far there have been 16 different moderated events attended by teachers from all over southern Europe. The discussions are always thought-provoking and often very lively. It's fascinating to interact with teachers from such a variety of locales and share experiences, advice and knowledge. It's amazing to discover how much we have in common! But our differences, as people and as teachers in different countries and contexts, are what make the forum discussions so delightful and enlightening.

There are many other things you can find at SEETA. There are links to all the participating teachers' associations and information about their conferences. You can read articles from the article bank or read a week-long blog by a teacher from one of the member associations. In "SEETA Playlists" you can find discussions led by different people who present their musical bent and lead a discussion about it. The most recent playlist discussion is called "Punk is Musical Freedom" led by Sonja Simon and has topics including "Women in punk," "Should we start with the Clash," and "There are beautiful ballads."

The SEETA Community Manager, Anna Parsi, notes in the welcome statement:

"...SEETA is a virtual on-line community of TAs (Teacher Associations) which enables our members to have hands on experience of using current technology as part of their professional development.

The overall objective is that this networking community will provide an ongoing and structured means of communication which can be developed by future associations and their members for their mutual benefit. Aside from being an effective way of promoting joint events and activities, it can also provide a teachers' forum for the exchange of ideas, information and articles. Other additional features include a valuable resource and data base for the use of all participant associations and a viable system for the exchange of newsletters, bulletins and other electronic publications. In all, it has the potential for establishing an interactive means of involving the wider membership in issues concerning the profession.

Time and geographical constraints have, until now, inhibited TAs from extending and enhancing links already made. The moodle platform enables us to overcome these obstacles and involve as many associations as possible as equal and active partners in the development of the networking system. In the new virtual future national boundaries may no longer play a role and it is what we have in common as teachers that will help us move forward and not our differences."

At the moment, the SEETA committee is drawing up an agreement outlining the duties, rights and responsibilities of member teacher associations so that SEETA will be able to serve us all, promoting the professional development of all members, as effectively and fairly as possible. However, the best way to insure that SEETA benefits us all is by joining in and participating in discussions. This is a regional endeavor, the virtual equivalent of a neighborhood block party. So, spend a few minutes, or even hours, a month, log on and... See ya at SEETA!

Michele Ben teaches at Ginsburg HaOren Six-year Comprehensive School in Yavneh, mainly in the JHS. She worked as a remedial reading teacher in Hebrew for 15 years before retraining ten years ago as an English teacher. Michele holds a BA in Special Education from Hebrew University, an MA in education from U.N.N. and a certificate in translation from Bar-Ilan.

NETSURFING

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

Hi All,

Spring has gone and summer is here.

I am focusing this time on websites for young learners but as you know, in each website we can find something for everyone. So even if you teach high school, you'll be able to find all sorts of games that can easily be adapted to the age group.

Remember, if you've got a good website that you come across, send it to me. Even if you think I might know it or have it, send it anyway. I'm available at *miri.yochanna@gmail.com*

Enjoy the conference!

Title	MES English
URL	http://www.mes-english.com/
Type	Resource center
Features	This site has EVERYTHING you could want. It is a wonderful resource center. There are worksheets, games, online games, flashcards, phonics stuff, project work, grammar games, etc, etc. While the site, essentially, is aimed at young learners, there are so many different things that even the older ones would have fun using the materials here.
Uses	I can see the materials being used in class, at home, in groups, individually. I would use my phonics to work with beginner readers, with non-readers, and with less able groups. The flashcards are great and can easily be printed and used for various games and activities. The worksheets are adorable and can be easily adapted for use in class. I could go on but I'd rather you checked it out for yourselves.
My favourite	I loved the games, the online games. They are fun, even for adults. There are some grammar online games that are great for all age groups. I had a wonderful time playing, so I'm sure the kids will too. One other thing that I really liked is the custom made worksheets. You can make your own worksheets /games based on your own vocabulary list. It's awesome.

Title	ESL Kids
URL	http://www.esl-kids.com/index.html
Type	Resource center and more
Features	This is also an excellent resource site with a plethora of materials and ideas for use in class. Again, this is aimed at young kids but the ideas and the materials are adaptable for use with older kids. There are worksheets, songs, games, flashcards, etc.
Uses	The materials on here can help enliven a lesson. The worksheets are wonderful and the songs are really great. All of the flashcards are appropriate; all you need to do is print them out.
My favourite	I like the worksheets. You can generate your own, using any words and pictures you want – you input a list of words and it adds the pictures (if you wish). The variety is amazing.

Title	Writing Wizard
URL	http://www.writingwizard.longcountdown.com/handwriting_practice_worksheet_maker.html
Type	Writing worksheet generator
Features	This is a great site for producing free worksheets to work on handwriting. You can make worksheets for the alphabet, for words, for short sentences. You can even make small workbooks. It's wonderful. It also works on different types of handwriting – cursive and print, with two different fonts.
Uses	This site helps you prepare worksheets for work on handwriting. ALL our students could use help with their handwriting, correct directionality, correct spacing, etc. This helps you produce these worksheets instantaneously. This can help teach cursive writing, which all kids want to learn but many teachers aren't sure they know it. Here's an opportunity to learn it and teach the kids.
My favourite	I like the workbooks. They are so cool. They are theme oriented and the kids write out the material in the workbooks. These could be expanded into projects with the older kids. What a treasure!

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; Pals, Wow! (UPP) and Highlight (ECB) as well as edited several others.

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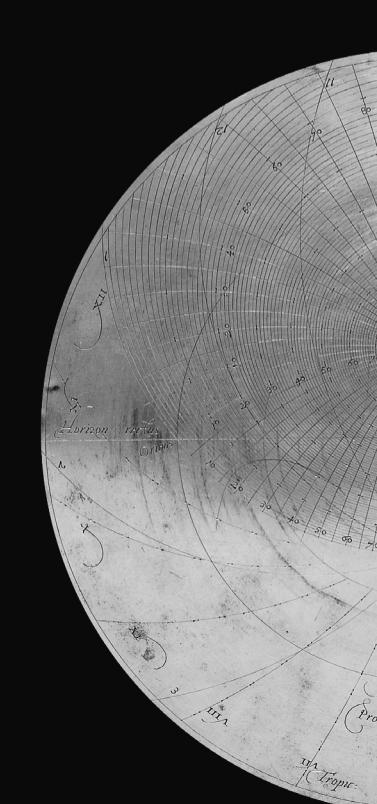
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