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The *ETAI Forum* is published by ETAI (English Teachers' Association of Israel)  
 POB 36206, Jerusalem, 91361. Tel: 02-5001844; Fax: 02-5001851 e-mail: [etaioffice@gmail.com](mailto:etaioffice@gmail.com);  
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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**

<b>Members</b>	<b>185 NIS</b>
<b>Full-time students*</b>	<b>130 NIS</b>
<b>New immigrants / New teachers</b>	<b>130 NIS</b>
<b>Retirees</b>	<b>130 NIS / 100 NIS**</b>
<b>Overseas members</b>	<b>200 NIS</b>

\* 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:  
[etni.org.il](http://etni.org.il)

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Lately, I've been thinking a lot about time. There never seems to be enough of it! Teachers are always **pressed for time**. There is always something that needs to get done, especially at the end of the school year: grading, meetings, planning lessons, planning for the future, reassessing the past and, of course and most important, teaching. In fact, sometimes it's really difficult to **make time for** anything but school! Nevertheless, **time flies** and before we know it, it's summer when we can finally **take some time off to have a good time**. And since summer gives us some **spare time**, ETAI gives us the opportunity to **invest some time** in professional development by learning from each other, attending sessions and chatting at the conference, or reading articles in the ETAI Forum. If you feel that it's **time for a change** you can get ideas from others and then when the **time is ripe**, implement the new ideas. **Time after time** after attending conferences, I feel rejuvenated, and ready to face the classroom and school community once again. In fact, the conference seems to come just in the **nick of time** when it seems that all work does is give me **a hard time**.

I'm sure we'll **have a whale of a time** at the conference and at all the other ETAI events throughout the year. Please **make the time** to participate and contribute in any way you can!

Michele Ben, ETAI Chairperson

Note: The following websites were useful in finding time idioms –

<http://www.ecenglish.com/learnenglish/lessons/time-idioms>

<http://english-tonight.com/everyday-english-expressions-about-time/>

[http://esl.about.com/od/vocabularyreference/a/time\\_expressions.htm](http://esl.about.com/od/vocabularyreference/a/time_expressions.htm)

<http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/time>



## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

From the Editor

Another issue of the Forum is here to enrich the leisure time you may hopefully have in the summer break from school. I am sure that for all of us, this much-needed time off is what saves our sanity by giving us time to slow down and rest, as well as to finally clean up the papers and general mess that has gathered on every free surface of our work space (and overflowed to other areas as well).

About half way through the vacation, and usually inspired by the ETAI Summer Conference or what I've read in the Forum, I begin to think about what new ideas I'd like to take with me into next year's classrooms. Here is the place to thank all you wonderful teachers for taking time out from your overburdened schedules to contribute articles to the ETAI Forum or to share your ideas in presentations at the ETAI conferences.

At some point during the summer break, I start researching and developing those ideas and their practical application. This is what really recharges my batteries and allows me to go into the new school year with anticipation, energy and optimism. That's why, after teaching for more than 30 years, I still look forward to each new school year.

Wishing you all a refreshing and enjoyable vacation.

Renee Wahl  
Co-Editor  
ETAI Forum

## REPORT ON THE SPRING ETAI MINI-CONFERENCE IN GAN RAVEH

By Amanda Caplan

This year's mini-conference in the central region moved to a new location, Gan Raveh. The facilities were better than we've ever had, there was parking space, the publishers were all conveniently located in one large room (with easy access) and the teachers were treated to a beautiful auditorium with comfy seats for the plenary session.

The plenary was given by our Chief Inspector Dr. Judy Steiner. The two hundred teachers who attended learned about the revisions that have been made in our Curriculum and will be coming into force soon.

The plenary was followed by four well-attended workshops: Jennifer Ayzen shared a HOTS fairy tale project, Leo Selivan from the British Council spoke in perfect English on the spoken grammar of English, Laura Shashua brought teachers up to date with innovative methods for teaching writing with the help of digital tools and Shiri Rosenberg gave a plethora of ideas for recycling vocabulary.

ETAI would like to thank Dr. Miriam Kluska, our local Inspector, for her invaluable help in organizing the conference and inviting all the teachers in the area. Those who attended went away enriched.

## VOCABULARY? WORDS? LEXIS? CONTEXT? THE 2013 ETAI SPRING CONFERENCE

This year's ETAI Spring Conference took place on March 18th and found us at a new venue: Herzog School in Kfar Saba. Participants were treated to sessions and plenaries that all focused on the theme "Vocabulary: The Ticket to Success in EFL." The day began with a fascinating talk by Aharona Gvoryahu called, "Yet another challenge: vocabulary and learners with challenges. Can the twain meet?" Using a few folk tales, Aharona gave the listeners a feel of what EFL learners experience while trying to acquire a usable vocabulary. The talk was enjoyable and enriching. After parallel sessions and breaks, when the delightful school kiosk provided lunch options, we gathered again in the school auditorium for the second plenary lecture. In her talk "Vocabulary

knowledge: Learners Passport for Functioning in a Second Language", Elisheva Barkon provided us with insights and wisdom about the extreme importance of lexical proficiency. The day continued with another round of parallel sessions, networking, socializing and browsing. Anne Saggi, the regional inspector, brought the day to a close with her greetings which preceded a debate about the methodology of vocabulary instruction. A raffle concluded the enriching and thought-provoking day. We'd like to thank Marj Bitran, English Department Coordinator, Herzog School and her team for their efforts in making the conference so successful. And thanks to all of you who presented and attended sessions. It was a terrific conference!

**Save the date**

**ETAI Winter Conference  
Sunday December 1st, 2013  
Beersheva  
See you there!**

## ETAI STUDENT CONFERENCE: STUDENTS IN THE SOUTH SHARE THEIR SUCCESS

By Maureen Rajuan (*maureen.rajuan@mail.huji.ac.il*)

The January 20, 2013 student conference sponsored by ETAI, was held at Achva College of Education and hosted the students of the English Department of Givat Washington. It was a huge success! The plenary session given by Micaela Ziv and the invited workshops given by Amanda Caplan, Michele Ben, Laura Shashua and Mitzi Geffen, all received very high ratings by the students on the assessment form. Leo Selivan's "pecha kucha" was the icing on the cake! However, this conference was not about the invited presenters, but rather about the students themselves.

The twenty student presentations from both colleges were all professionally carried out, from the writing of the abstracts through to the final presentations and power point presentations. Irena Tuchin of Achva College was in charge of the students' contributions, meeting with the volunteers of the student committee that organized the presentations into sessions, acted as session chairs and oversaw all the organizational aspects.

Combining theory with practice, the student presentations included a wide variety of topics divided into sessions on technology, creativity, literature, life issues, the performing arts and learning styles. Presentations included subjects such as coping with stereotypes and bullying, storytelling, teaching EFL through movement, the use of films and recycling. There were also some very original topics that have most likely never been presented before, such as drawing as a reading comprehension strategy for the promotion of mental health, the teacher as an actor, how to apply make-up in the EFL classroom and mother-daughter relationships.

Some of the students' comments:

"I especially like the fact that we, the students, presented."

"The students' presentations contributed the most to my knowledge because they spoke about things that they actually did in the classroom."

"Everything was new to me and I really enjoyed it."

"I learned the importance of being creative and how to include creative things in the classroom."

The only "negative" comment on the assessment form was the oft-heard complaint that not all presentations could be attended due to the organization into parallel sessions. We hope this will leave the students with a desire for more and that we will see many of our future graduates at ETAI events as they become novice and experienced teachers. After all, as "all the flowers of tomorrow are in the seeds of today," all the future ETAI leaders of tomorrow are in the student teachers of today.

*Dr. Maureen Rajuan, the organizer of the student conference together with Amanda Caplan, is a Teacher Trainer in the English Department of Achva College of Education. She received her doctorate from Eindhoven University in the Netherlands in the subject of mentoring of student teachers. Formerly, she was an educational counselor and an English teacher in the school system and an EFL teacher at Hebrew University.*

**Do you want an ETAI  
mini-conference near  
YOU?**

Please contact the ETAI office  
for further details:

02-5001844

or

[etaioffice@gmail.com](mailto:etaioffice@gmail.com)

## NOTES FROM AN EVENT IN HONOR OF PENNY UR

By Naomi Ganin Epstein

I was fortunate enough to have had the pleasure of attending a moving event after a busy day at the IATEFL Conference in Liverpool. The event, hosted by Cambridge University Press, was in honor of Prof. Penny Ur, who had just received an OBE from the Queen of England.

Prof. Ur spoke of how she began writing for “Cambridge” and later I heard some of the guests sharing their personal “Penny Tales”.

The advantage of having my own blog is that I can share my own “Penny Tales”!

I started attending our wonderful national ETAI Conferences shortly after becoming a teacher, 27 years ago. That is where I first had the pleasure of attending Penny’s useful and informative talks. For me, Penny was simply an integral part of ETAI. In those days, first as a young teacher and then as a mother of young children, I have to admit that I was remarkably uninterested in people’s existence outside of the conference walls. I made an effort to attend conferences and “made a beeline” to the lectures of those speakers whose talks I knew I would find useful. I’m proud to say that ETAI brings together a great many inspiring teachers worth listening to.

Later on, naturally, I DID learn more about the books

Penny had written and projects she was involved in, but I didn’t grasp how famous she was until I joined twitter, two and a half years ago. Suddenly I heard people recommending her books and tweeting excitedly from talks she was giving around the globe. When I mentioned that I had heard Penny on a number of occasions teachers were jealous! I refrained from saying that at ETAI one could actually TALK to Penny during the conference. In fact, she didn’t speak only at the large conferences in Jerusalem – I attended a talk of hers at a MINI CONFERENCE (one afternoon) at the school down the road from my home!

At the IATEFL conference in Liverpool I discovered that “famous” was too mild a word. Teachers were lining up to ask for autographs and to have their picture taken with Prof. Ur.

I just wanted to say that seeing all of that hasn’t changed my opinion of Penny. One can’t respect a person any more when that person has already earned your utmost respect.

Penny; thank you for helping me discover many things as a teacher, including the fact that attending English Teacher’s Conferences is a very rewarding thing to do.

I wish Prof. Penny Ur all the best for many years to come!

## A TRIBUTE TO SHOSHANA BEN YAAKOV 1955-2013

By Susan Bedein

It is hard to imagine Himmelfarb School without Shoshana Ben Yaakov, as she was involved in so many aspects of the running of the school for 30 years.

First and foremost, Shoshana was a teacher. Every student who had the privilege of being in one of Shoshana’s classes knew exactly what was expected of him, and he also knew that he would come out of each and every lesson having gained new knowledge.

As the English coordinator, Shoshana guided the members of her staff with enthusiasm, compassion and patience. Every English teacher, as well as many of the other teachers, gained from Shoshana’s desire and willingness to share her knowledge and experience.

As the pedagogical coordinator, Susan’s students knew that they could discuss their choices for their majors, get help with negotiating their way through the Bagrut system, or just have a talk about life in general at any time. Her door was always open for everyone.

Shoshana Ben Yaakov will be sorely missed by the Himmelfarb family of students, parents, teachers and principals, by the Jerusalem English coordinators, by the Jerusalem Inspectorate and by all who had the privilege of knowing her.

## USING GAMES EFFECTIVELY IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

Language Learning & Play

Ellyn Marciano and Brenda Liberman (*sunfishee@gmail.com*)

“Play holds the source of all that is good” – Froebel, 1897

It doesn't take an expert to see that children are naturally programmed for play. This is how they learn about their world and develop the fundamental skills they need to solve increasingly complex problems in their social and academic lives. The effect of structured play on cognitive development is undisputed. Through play, children develop cooperative, creative, and communication skills. Young children are naturally curious, but this innate curiosity can be stifled and replaced with a sense of inadequacy and anxiety when educational methods focus too much on performance and do not provide enough opportunities for discovery and play. Well-chosen games allow children to experience success while practicing new skills without fear of failure or inadequacy. Games add an important element of fun and enjoyment, creating a positive association with learning.

Learning a second language can be a difficult and frustrating task for children at any age. To understand, produce, and manipulate the new language, learners must make a constant effort to practice and repeat words and phrases. EFL teachers have long since discovered the advantages of using games in their classrooms for practicing skills while also breaking from the routine, adding interest and encouraging social interaction and participation. Games that use language in meaningful, relevant contexts and are fun *and educational*, challenging *but not frustrating*, can be highly motivating and encourage cooperation and participation. Structured games that involve repeated use of vocabulary and language structures stimulate the areas of the brain that are responsible for linguistic development. This kind of repetition in a low-anxiety atmosphere can improve retention.

In addition to the cognitive and practical advantages, games also have the psychological effect of reducing pressure and anxiety, common road blocks to learning and which may prevent children from reaching their full potential (Vale and Feunteun, 1995). There is a significant amount of research in the fields of education, child psychology, sociology and neurology that indicate the positive effect of play, specifically with structured games, on successful language acquisition. When children are immersed in play, they are far more likely to internalize and give meaning to the target language (Paul, 2003).

Positive reinforcement and feelings of success have a

major impact on the efficiency of the cognitive process. A positive emotional experience can determine how effectively learners will be able to learn and retain a new language. As teachers, we can directly influence how our students interact with English language learning by providing experiences that promote feelings of success and enjoyment. The intricate balance of stimulation, challenge, positive reinforcement and success can determine how much your students will engage in language learning.

### What Are Good Classroom Games?

Most schools have to cope with a very limited budget for extra materials. Therefore, it is important to choose games carefully. English games should offer the best possible educational value for your classroom by being interesting, and of appropriate age and skill level. In addition to being fun, motivating and visually appealing, a good classroom game should accommodate a range of skill levels for heterogeneous classrooms, and present language that supports the curriculum and is relevant to the child's real world. Familiar game formats and simple instructions will prevent frustration and the need for over-facilitating from the teacher. A good game will encourage repeated play by not being too complicated or going on for too long.

An additional consideration for choosing games for your classroom should be the value of the game for students with **learning disabilities or difficulties**. Games that provide audio support or computer options can be very helpful to these students. Furthermore, technological options can add interest and versatility. Consider games that can be used in more than one way to vary the skills being practiced and add elements of challenge.

### **When to Use Games**

Games can be used at any stage of an English lesson, not only as a warm-up or filler activity, but also as the focus of a lesson, as long as the games are relevant and suitable. Well-chosen games should be used frequently in the classroom because they are:

- **Motivational and interesting** – *which encourages repeated use of language*
- **Relaxing and fun** – *which aids in retention*
- **Interactive and social** – *which encourages participation and involvement*

## References

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- Richard-Amato, P., A. 1996. *Making It happen*. New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Group. pp 192-199.
- Vale, D., & Feunteun, A. (1995). *Teaching Children English: A Training course for Teachers of English to Children*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

*Ellyn Marciano, M.A., emigrated from the U.S. in 1996 and has been teaching in Israeli schools since 1997. She co-founded Sunfish English Educational Projects with friend and partner Brenda Liberman. Ellyn is currently developing educational products through her company and continues to teach EFL classes to high school students, and provides professional training to EFL teachers in Israel.*

*Brenda Liberman, M.A., co-founder of Sunfish English Educational Projects, has been teaching English in private groups in various settings for over 15 years. She holds an M.A. in group leadership from Lesley College. Brenda specializes in using creative means to teach English to children with learning difficulties.*

## LET'S USE AND NOT ABUSE WORKSHEETS

(and how to make them).

by Iris Shenkman (*Iris1648@yahoo.com*)

12:24 pm and Miss Bell (who in Israel is called by her first name, Barbara) is tired after five hours of teaching her large, heterogeneous classes. So, what does she do? In her closet are boxes of worksheets. What a panacea! But that is not the reaction of the kids. "OOOF ...again... that is all we do. They are so boring!" Yes I am sure you have heard or experienced this scenario, but this should not be the solution. The English lesson should be motivating and challenging for all the kids. We have access, inter alia, to: games, songs, competitions, and stories, so why do so many teachers feel they always have to whip out a worksheet???

Worksheets are an important addition to many lessons. They help in practicing the material being learned. When teaching any enrichment topic (holidays or non-course book material) the pupils need to take the new vocabulary home....correctly spelled. Worksheets will help with the very weak or advanced learners for whom the book is inappropriate. **But they should not be abused and definitely not overused. They should NOT be used when the kids have the same material in their books and they should always be given within the context of the topic of the lesson, to expand and enrich!**

Yaron (2004) talks about the "worksheet epidemic" and the multiple disadvantages for teachers, pupils and schools of overdoing worksheets. While his arguments all have validity, I do not believe teachers will work hard to prepare appropriate worksheets. The problem as I see it, is that teachers will use downloaded and photocopied worksheets, which do not complement, compliment or

supplement their lessons. I would like to make some suggestions to help you prepare meaningful worksheets when they are really necessary.

**Pupils in the 3rd, 4th and 5th grade should not waste time copying five-ten new vocabulary words from the blackboard.** Inevitably they will copy the words with mistakes and subsequently learn to write those words with mistakes. The teacher could use that time more effectively to practice the words in sentences and in context and teach more words! So, for new enrichment material that is not in their textbook, a worksheet is definitely called for. If a worksheet includes pictures with the vocabulary, any absent pupil can learn the material too.

Worksheets should not be overused. They should be progressively challenging and **maximized for content**. Principals do not appreciate photocopying pages with only one or two activities if there is room on the page for more. However, avoid over-crowding which can scare your pupils. Worksheets should be aesthetic, motivating and they should practice exactly what you taught. They should include all of the words you taught and only those words.

Today, it is soooo easy to download worksheets from the abundance of internet sites available. If you do, make sure you have taught what is on the worksheet. Make sure the worksheet practices what you taught. To ensure this, it is often easier to create your own worksheets than to use someone else's material. So here are some guidelines:



I Every worksheet should have a place for the pupil's name at the top since there will always be pupils who drop them or leave them in the classroom. The teacher should write the name of every absent pupil on a sheet to remember to whom to give it. Some schools require the name of the school on every worksheet. Pay attention to the capital letters. We do not use colons (:)! Colons are for a list. Just write:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

The date is optional depending on the class.

**Try to use Comic Sans or a simple, clear font. Never write the class level!**

**This way you can** use the worksheet for different classes and individual pupils from different classes.

The class and date are optional depending on the grade.

II The topic of the lesson should be written in bubble letters especially for the lower grades. This will let you review the colors and letters while spelling the words. Use the sentence: Color the "C" green (not "in green").

III Next draw (scan, photocopy, take from the internet) your pictures and write the words directly under, above or on the right side of each picture. Your choice of location doesn't matter, but be consistent.

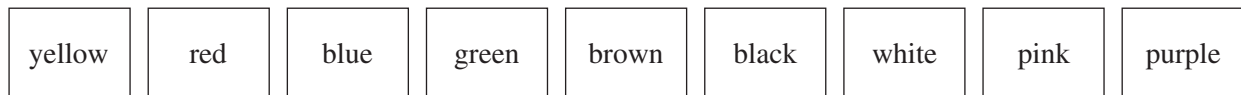
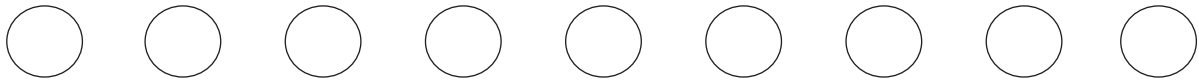
IV Below is a SAMPLE worksheet with a multitude of activities. Notice how the activities are varied in difficulty. Start with easy ones and gradually make them more difficult.

Name Roni Lapede

----- Golda School

Date Wednesday, Oct. 4th 2012

## COLORS



I FILL IN THE MISSING LETTERS. (sometimes you might only want the vowels, so write...the missing vowels: a e i o u).

Always use all the words. Here is one example.

The version below is for a very weak class or for preparation for a quiz.

y e \_ l o \_ b \_ u \_ b r \_ w \_ b l \_ c \_ \_ i \_ k p \_ r p \_ e r \_ d

b r o w n b \_ o w n b \_ o \_ n \_ r \_ w \_ b \_ \_ \_ n b \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

II MATCH. (the picture to the word (or sentence), the capital to the lower case letter etc.)

When there are a lot of words to match teach them to draw lines with a ruler and use different colors so that you can check it more easily.

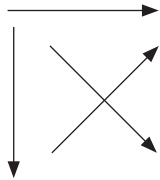
III CIRCLE THE SAME WORDS. (LETTERS, SENTENCES)

red	reb red rep red ned red red rad
blue	bleu blue blee blue blue dlu blue bloe
black	black block dlack black blach black black
white	whit white whlte white mwhite white wite

IV WORDSEARCH (if you do not have the words that they must find above, then make a word bank on the side or at the bottom.)

Please remember that words in an ENGLISH wordsearch especially for the lower grades MUST be horizontal, vertical, and diagonal from left to right like English. The other directions are confusing.

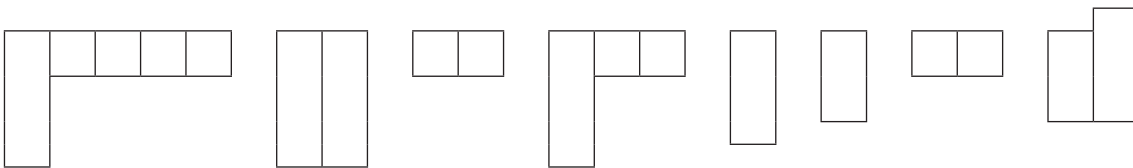
y	p	u	r	p	l	e
e	i	g	s	r	e	b
l	n	t	r	u	d	r
l	k	g	l	e	f	o
o	v	b	r	x	e	w
w	h	i	t	e	a	n
b	l	a	c	k	j	u



V UNSCRAMBLE THE LETTERS. (WORDS OR SENTENCES)

- PNKI \_\_\_\_\_ DRE \_\_\_\_\_ ELYLWO \_\_\_\_\_  
 BUEL \_\_\_\_\_ WITHE \_\_\_\_\_ RBWON \_\_\_\_\_  
 REGNE \_\_\_\_\_ BKLCA \_\_\_\_\_ URPPPEL \_\_\_\_\_

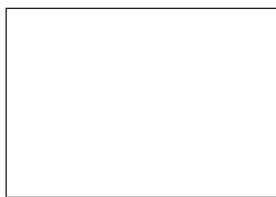
VI WORD PUZZLES. (This is imperative for having them focus on the proportion between the tall (t;l;k;h;f;b,d), long leg (q,y,p,g,j) and other lower case letters.(a,c,e,i.m.n.o.r,s,u v w x z). It will improve their handwriting too.



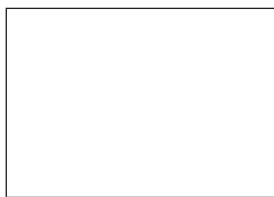
VII MAKE RHYMES (OR FIND THE RHYMES).

red brown seen pink bed clown black think green sack

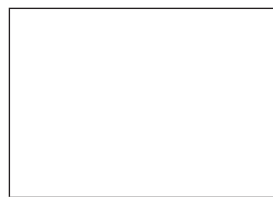
VIII DRAW



a brown book



a red hat



a purple ball

IX. CIRCLE THE WORDS IN THE MAZE. The maze can be any shape; curvy ones are nice.

H G R E E N D J P I N K K K B L A C K T  
 O B  
 R R  
 E O  
 D W  
 B N  
 L O  
 U R  
 E P U R P L E J H W H I T E Y E L L O W

X. SONG (Try to put a song on the worksheet for reading while singing)  
 The Color Song / The Classroom Song (to the melody of London Bridge)

Red, yellow, pink and blue (3x)	Pens, pencils notebooks , books (3x)
Purple, green and brown too are some colors.	Erasers, markers and schoolbags are in our classroom.

This song can work with any vocabulary you want to reinforce.  
 Of course, you can change the words and add stanzas.  
 This way you are focusing on the vocabulary and not worrying about learning new melodies.

XI. SECRET CODE

A=1 B=2 C=3 D=4 E=5 F=6 G=7 H=8 I=9 J=10  
 K=11 L=12 M=13 N=14 O=15 P=16 Q=17 R=18  
 S=19 T=20 U=21 V=22 W=23 X=24 Y=25 Z=26

\_\_\_\_\_ .  
 20 8 5 2 1 12 12 8 19 16 21 18 16 12 5

XII. MAKE A LIST (you can give them a word bank or this can be a free group or pair competition).  
 (This can also be called CATEGORIZE if you are using clothes or animals or food)

red	blue	yellow	green	brown	black	white	pink	purple
apple	sky	banana	tree					
			avocado					

XIII. RIDDLES (this is more suitable for animals, professions etc.)

I am very tall.	I am very big.	I am big.
I have a long neck.	I am gray.	I am brown.
I am yellow with spots.	I have a long nose.	I am the king.
I am a _____ .	I am an _____ .	I am a _____ .

If you want to use riddles for food, say: It is yellow.  
 It is long and thin.  
 It is a \_\_\_\_\_ .

XIV. CROSSWORD PUZZLES

horizontal →

vertical ↓

(make sure that your definitions are not more difficult than the vocabulary that you are teaching or use pictures).

XV. FILL IN have or has (is, am or are).

XVI. CLOZE – This is a paragraph or short story with arbitrary words missing. This is an evaluation of reading comprehension. A cloze can be prepared on 3 levels: a) unaided for strong pupils, b) word bank below or 3) with three choices after the blank space.

XVII. MAKE NEW WORDS from the letters of a big word. The letters may be mixed up. They may not be used twice or three times unless they are in the word.

This is a lovely pair or group work competition. Get them used to checking their words in the dictionary. It can be a 5-minute filler individually at the end. It is fun for you and you'll learn words.

independence

in pen pin end need den deed die died deep decide depend nip pie  
pee pine nice niece dip piece id tin din dine dined dice ended diced.

XVIII. VOCABULARY FUN – Another nice group or pair work activity is to make a table with the letters of a topic or holiday at the top and different subjects down the side. Give them a time limit to fill it in. You can let them use dictionaries. Tell them they aren't expected to find words for every letter. You can give them a joker.

☺	P	U	R	I	M
<b>food</b>	pizza pudding pretzel	upside down cake	rice	ice cream	melon meat mango margarine
<b>clothes</b>	pants	undershirt	roller blades		mini skirt
<b>people</b>	pupil	umpire	reporter	Indian	man
<b>sports</b>	polo		racing running rock climbing	ice skating	mountain climbing
<b>places</b>	park Paris	United States	rodeo Russia	Israel Italy	mall Morocco

XIX. PRACTICE READING AND WRITING

Give them several pictures with three or four sentences underneath each picture. Have them circle the correct sentence. If you want them to write, draw a line and ask them to copy the correct sentence.

XX. READING COMPREHENSION

A variation of XIX is to write a sentence and have them draw a picture (or give them three pictures and have them circle the correct picture).

Give them a column of some sentences and a column of pictures, not in order, and have them draw a line to the pairs.

XXI. PRACTICE WRITING – For guided writing, give them a table from which they choose a word or expression from each column. This can be at all levels.

Always give them one example.

The boy	have has	a computer.
The girl		many friends.
The boys		a good teacher.
The girls		a book.
The pupils		two footballs.

Make sentences.

1. The boy has a book.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. \_\_\_\_\_ .
4. \_\_\_\_\_ .
5. \_\_\_\_\_ .

**XXII. FINISH THE STORY (OR POEM)**

**XXIII. WRITE A STORY**

Give them a picture and ask them to write a story. You can give them a word bank or even a list of sentences to choose from. This will make the activity on different levels.

Enjoy your work!

So, dear readers and motivated English teachers, I wish you great success in your endeavors to prepare great worksheets, which you will successfully use and, of course, never abuse!

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**Save the date**



**ETAI Winter Conference**  
**Sunday December 1st, 2013**  
**Beersheva**  
**See you there!**

## SPELLING MADE EASY

Pauline Newman (*lifeskills@paulinenewman.com*)

If you can spell well, your reading and writing improves. Your comprehension improves and this has a huge effect on all your learning. So why do so many people have difficulty with spelling in English and how can we overcome this?

The English alphabet has 26 letters – 21 consonants and 5 vowels. The English language is made up of 44 different sounds. However, the letters of the alphabet can also be combined to form over 1,120 different pronunciations.

For example we have the “ough” combination as in:

**Thought, though, through, cough, rough, bough**

With the same vowel sound as

**Sort, go, too, off, stuff, cow,** respectively.

We also have words that sound the same but are spelled differently. E.g.

**new – knew / write – right / shore – sure / plane – plain**

**vein – vain / higher – hire / scene – seen**

Now let us consider Hebrew. It has 22 letters and with the vowels makes approximately 32 different sounds. There are only 6 pairs of letters that may confuse us:

ס	ק	ט	ח	ב	א
ש	ך	ת	כ	ו	ע

Is it no wonder that when an Israeli tries to spell in English it is so confusing since they have been used to an almost totally phonetic system of spelling in their native language! This is also a problem for many English speaking children who are being taught English using just phonics, resulting in a crisis in many schools in English speaking countries. About one in 10 pupils are labelled as dyslexic and about one third of children leave primary school unable to spell, read and write at the target level for their age.

Spelling made easy has been designed to solve this problem. It was developed based on NLP psychology. NLP, Neuro-Linguistic Programming, looks for excellence and copies it. The theory is that if one person can do something excellently, you can learn how they do it, and you can replicate it. Robert Dilts a founder of NLP put together a group of naturally good spellers and asked detailed questions about what was happening internally, in their thoughts and feelings, when they spelled well. He noticed the same patterns were consistently being used amongst the good spellers.

Usually, the good spellers did not know how they were achieving their good spelling. He then looked at a group of poor spellers and discovered that they were doing different things internally, having different thoughts and feelings. He taught these poor spellers the strategy that the good spellers used and when they tried it they also became good spellers. He used excellent spellers as a model and this is what he found. The good speller feels relaxed and confident. When the speller wants to write a word, the person will often look upwards to the right or left, will see an image of the word in their head and send a message down to their hand and the word will automatically be written or typed. The speller will also know by a feeling inside themselves whether the word looks correct after they have written it. This is all done with the unconscious mind. There is no effort to it. The only time a good speller stops to sound out words and think about the phonetic rules for spelling is when this fluent, unconscious strategy lets them down.

*If raednig Esignlh was learnt by suodnig the wrdors uot, how cmoe yuo cna raed tish snetecen.*

Using only phonetics to spell, read and write produces poor results. Good readers use different strategies from poor readers. Good readers recognise words as whole forms rather than phonetic parts and do not try to sound out each syllable as a poor reader would. Poor readers read slowly and this affects understanding. People who read rapidly generally have better concentration and comprehension because their reading speed is keeping pace with their thinking speed. It is remarkable that only in reading do we limit our eyes to a single symbol. You look at a painting or a scene as a whole, not left to right or a section at a time. When we read quickly we can take in whole groups of words, whole ideas in a glance.

**The Spelling Made Easy strategy consists of 7 different parts:**

1. Prepare, on individual flashcards, a list of 10 non-phonetic words that you know the student cannot spell.
2. Find where the student naturally stores images in their head.
3. Help the student to feel really good about themselves.
4. Show the student one of the words.
5. Ask the student to see the word in their mind and spell it forwards and backwards.

6. Ask the student to write it down and recognise the feeling that tells them it is correct or wrong.
7. Ask the student to check their answer letter by letter.

Throughout the whole process the student must be kept in a positive state of mind. The student is always made to feel they are right and if they do make a mistake, it is the teacher's problem i.e. the teacher should say that they haven't shown them the word enough times. Remember that poor spellers know that they are poor spellers and if they think they are failing, they will go into their low self-esteem mode of working and this will interfere with the process. High self-esteem is vital to the process.

## THE STRATEGY

1. Choose 10 non-phonetic words e.g. laughter, comb, sausage, once, rhythm.
2. To discover where the student stores images in their head, ask them several questions and watch where they move their eyes. For most people it is up to their left, but for some it is up to their right. NLP has discovered that we have our visual memory stored upwards: visual recall (which we want to use here) for 90% of people is up to the left, visual creative is usually up to the right. The questions should be clear and simple e.g.
  - HOW MANY WINDOWS DOES YOUR FLAT HAVE?
  - DESCRIBE YOUR KITCHEN/BEDROOM.
  - WHAT COLOUR IS YOUR TOOTHBRUSH?

Do NOT ask a question where the student may go into their feelings.

Now practise with the student seeing imaginary pictures of members of their family or their friends in the area where they have shown that they store their visual recall. Make sure you are sitting directly opposite the student and that they are looking directly at you, only raising their eyes to the left or the right. This is to show the student that they can see things in their head

3. To make the student feel really good about themselves, ask them to think of a time when they were totally confident and successful in something, and felt really wonderful. Tell them to see what they could see then, hear what they could hear then and in their imagination to jump back into the experience and get all the wonderful feelings they had then. Give it a colour and a shape. Get the student to store that feeling, colour and shape just above their head. Ask

them to make it stronger. This part is vital because it gives the student the confidence they need to spell successfully, something which they have always failed to do before.

4. Hold the word up and to the left (or right). Tell the student to keep that good feeling and read the word three times and then put it into a sentence. This gives the student plenty of time to see the word and also to ascertain that they understand the meaning and pronounce it correctly. Encourage the student to notice the shape of the word, the high letters and the low letters, the curly letters and the straight letters and the double letters. Keep encouraging their good feeling and say, *“As you are feeling this feeling, notice how easily your eyes can see the whole word. As you are feeling this feeling, are there any letters you would like to make even clearer? Keeping that lovely feeling, I am now turning the card away from you and notice that you can still see the word up to the left (right) in your mind's eye. How many letters can you see?”* if the student gives the wrong answer, just boost their good feeling and show them the word again. Remember the student is always right and it is your fault that you did not give them enough time to look. Remember to keep using the present continuous tense. This keeps the strategy happening in the moment.
5. Once the student is confident that they know how many letters are in the word, ask them to spell the word. If it is incorrect just repeat points 3 and 4. Remember, it is not completely correct YET. Once they can spell the word forwards, ask them to spell it backwards. This is most important because to spell a word backwards you need to be able to see the word in your head. Just try it for yourself with a word e.g. “envelope”. If the student can do this, you know the process is working.
6. Ask the student to write the word and ask them if they think they have written it correctly. Again this is very important because they need to learn to trust themselves. If they think it is correct, ask them where they feel it. *“Is the feeling in your head, or your heart or in your stomach?”* They will know. Ask them the colour of the feeling and remind them that this is what they need to feel every time they write a word correctly. If they do not feel the word is correct, let them practise writing it a few times to see if they can get that feeling. Otherwise repeat points 3 to 6, always keeping the student feeling good about themselves.

7. Now get the student to mark the spelling by looking up for each letter, saying it and ticking each letter one by one. This helps to reinforce the spelling in the visual memory. Make sure the student has a correctly written word to look at.

The student now has to do some homework. NLP research says it takes about three weeks to change a habit. They have been using the wrong habit for their spellings and now need to learn the correct habit. They need to practise this for about 10 minutes every day for three weeks to make sure they change the poor habit. I have had poor spelling students coming back to me after three weeks saying that they cannot find any words to learn because they know them all now! It is also important for the student to read as much as they can.

I have given a basic outline of how the strategy works. Of course there are many things the instructor must be aware of. I would highly recommend that anyone wishing to use this system for their students should aim to read a book about NLP. Some students may not want to look upwards because they are afraid of negative memories. A conscientious teacher would need to know how to deal with this. A good teacher will need to understand the body language of the student and be very aware of when the student is increasing or losing their good feeling. A good teacher will always assume the student is succeeding, always uses positive language, and that whatever happens the student cannot be wrong. A good teacher will be able to let the student discover how they can see the word the best way for themselves. Some will need to imagine that they see it on TV or computer screen, some will need to add colour, some will need to glue it down so the letters stop moving about in their heads – a common problem with children who are labelled dyslexic.

Most of the people who have been referred to me were labelled as dyslexic. As long as they were of normal intelligence I have been able to help them with amazing

results. Some improved their reading age by 2 years within a few months, another opened up a lazy eye because they had never used that eye muscle to look upwards before, others overtook their older brothers and sisters with their spelling and many amazed their parents and grandparents at how well they could spell difficult words backwards! One of my favourites was a woman of 71 who had kept her poor spelling a secret all her life. She now has grandchildren and needs to be able help them. You can read her glowing testimonial on my website along with other testimonials and a short video of a seven year old girl doing the strategy for her mother. This strategy really works.

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*Recommended reading: An Introduction to NLP by Joseph O'Connor and Ian McDermott and In Your Hands and Handing Over by Jane Revell – both excellent for using NLP in the English language classroom. Recommended website: [www.magicalspellinglimited.com](http://www.magicalspellinglimited.com). This explains the process in detail and also you can obtain a short booklet from them which will be of great help.*

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## FROM PEDAGOGY TO LEXICOGRAPHY AND BACK

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**Introduction**

The familiar observation that all dictionaries are, to an extent, learner's dictionaries raises questions about the relationship between lexicography and pedagogy. Is it sufficient to produce a good learner's dictionary and leave it up to the learner to learn, or should the lexicographer also support the retention of looked-up words? And if teachers are expected to teach dictionary skills, may they not also expect dictionaries to intentionally promote vocabulary acquisition? For their part, foreign language learners testify that it is not unusual to have to look up the same word more than once. Clearly, lexicography and pedagogy can complement one another.

This paper reports on one attempt to do so. Following a review of the lexicalia that in one way or another address vocabulary acquisition, we chronicle the development of *Bagrut Lexicon*, which was recently published in Israel by Ofarim Publishers. Some of its salient features are then detailed. Finally, we point out ways in which this concept may be developed further.

**Literature Review**

Many learners' dictionaries contain usage notes either within the entry or in marked off boxes. The notes usually focus on synonyms or the syntactic idiosyncrasies of a particular lemma. Thus they supply supplementary information about the headword, but not practice in its use.

The *Oxford Wordfinder* takes a different approach. It is a meaning-to-word dictionary whose purpose is to facilitate language production. There are two search modes. Users can search for a known word and find in the same place other words related by meaning and use. Alternatively, if a user does not know a superordinate term with which to begin a search, a thematic index suggests various words related by topic. Each entry contains sufficient definitions, usage examples, synonyms, opposites, derivatives and collocations for the user to decide whether the word expresses the intended meaning. The entries do not contain practice exercises, but they do provide excellent opportunities for encountering new vocabulary items in a meaningful context by browsing the thematically related entries or following the ample cross-references. In addition, the OUP website provides free photocopiable worksheets. It is a pity that these are not mentioned in the front matter because they somewhat compensate for the absence of practice exercises within the book itself.

A more useful kind of learning tool can be found in various dictionary-skills manuals linked to specific dictionaries but published separately. One such handbook is Bloch's *Use Your Dictionary*. It contains a wealth of drills delving into every aspect of the entry structure with examples drawn from the whole range of entries in the dictionary. While vocabulary acquisition is not the purpose of the book, the drills afford numerous opportunities for incidental learning. A drawback is the expense of purchasing the manual in addition to the corresponding dictionary. A more recent book of this type is Merriam-Webster's *How To Use Your Dictionary*. Its major purpose is to introduce native speakers "to the dictionary and thesaurus, to explain their contents, and to put students at their ease with the typographical and structural conventions of these resources." (p.4a). As such, the major part of its content is similar to the explanatory front matter which appears in most dictionaries. However, seventeen of its eighty-four pages are devoted to vocabulary-building questions "that can be answered by looking up words ... in the dictionary." (p.4a). Many of these exercises are devoted to etymology and to homonym differentiation and are unsuited to TEFL, but they do support the retention of looked-up words.

From a teacher's point of view, none of the three foregoing types is entirely satisfactory. Teacher-designed exercises are an alternative. Their disadvantage is that they are extremely time-consuming to produce and the effort is only worthwhile if all members of a class possess the same dictionary.

A more deliberate approach to integrating lexicography with pedagogy can be found in Phillips' *Vocabulary Dictionary and Workbook*. It is a lexicon of 2,856 words for academic purposes together with sets of word games for vocabulary practice. The truly innovative feature of the book is its verso-recto page setup (see Figure 1). The entries are divided into alphabetic groups (so-called 'chapters') of 12 lemmas and each double-page spread is devoted to a single chapter, with the lexicon always on the verso and the word games always on the recto. There are two benefits to this setup. Firstly, it sends a clear message to the learner that merely looking up a word is not sufficient to guarantee retention of its meaning. Secondly, by juxtaposing the two entities on the same folio, it simplifies and encourages repeated look-ups during practice. However, the games themselves are

disappointing as there are only 12 test items for the 12 lemmas. This decreases the element of risk to the point that the games do not challenge the intellect.

Folio	
Verso	Recto

Figure 1

### Chronological Development

The project was motivated by the twin observations that learner's dictionaries do not contain vocabulary practice exercises and that few TEFL materials are explicitly devoted to vocabulary acquisition. The majority are textbooks or books concentrating on grammar, reading comprehension, writing or listening. A mere 2% of the books in a TEFL library in Jerusalem were found to be expressly dedicated to the teaching of words. How then are learners expected to expand their vocabulary? And which words are to be taught?

To answer the latter question, a corpus was constructed using TextSTAT, a freely downloadable application. The corpus consists of 58 homogeneous matriculation-level reading comprehension texts, and yields 21,000 tokens and 5,000 types. In the process of constructing the corpus, a downward trend was noted in the incidence of novel types per additional text (see Figure 2), indicating that the vocabulary of this genre tends to be repetitive. The 5,000 types are therefore the most relevant candidates for a learner's lexicon.

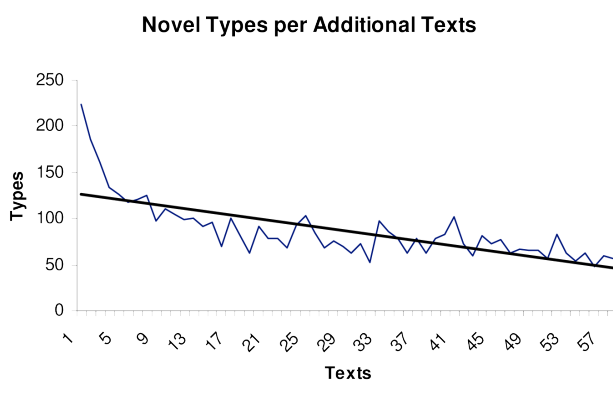


Figure 2

All function words, proper nouns and numbers were deleted from the list of 5,000 candidates. Poorly dispersed words and Hebrew cognates were also removed. The remaining words were manually lemmatised and POS tagged. In the next stage of selection, words listed in the lexical syllabus for primary schools in Israel (*English Syllabus for Schools*) were also discarded, thus leaving a final list of 2,000 words.

These 2,000 words constituted the headword list for the lexicon, which was compiled using *TLex Dictionary Compilation Software*. The lexicon was designed along the lines of a semi-bilingual learner's dictionary. Specifically, each entry consists of a headword, grammatical information, definition, usage example and Hebrew translation equivalent. The translations were verified by a native speaker. The usage examples were adapted from the 58-text corpus or various corpora freely available on the Internet, and multiple senses were provided whenever they were evidenced in the original corpus<sup>1</sup>. Other features include phonemic pronunciation guides, usage labels, phrasal verbs with separate headword status and alternative spellings. The result is a unidirectional specialised lexicon for passive use.

There is nothing novel in this well-established format. However, *Bagrut Lexicon* does break new ground by coupling the semi-bilingual lexicon with Phillips' verso-recto page setup and by providing practice exercises that genuinely challenge intermediate-to-advanced learners. Meaningful practice is established by three means. Firstly, the lexicon divides entries into alphabetic groups of 20 lemmas and provides 30 practice items per group. This increases the risk of a false answer and thereby obligates the user to return to the lexicon. Secondly, the 30 practice items are sub-divided into six exercise types with increasing levels of difficulty. The fifth type is particularly difficult as it requires 5 choices from 20 possibilities. The final means of offering meaningful practice is the introduction of one new exercise type after the learner has become familiar with the original six. In the editing stage, the exercises were confirmed to have unambiguous answers.

### Conclusion

We have reported on the development of a new type of lexicon that is based on sound lexicographic and pedagogical principles. The purpose of the lexicon is to equip the learner with the vocabulary necessary for decoding matriculation-level reading comprehension texts without consulting a dictionary. It is too soon to

<sup>1</sup> Senses that were not evidenced in the corpus were not included in the lexicon.

determine whether it achieves this goal but the very publication of the book calls for designers of learner's dictionaries to seriously assess the pedagogic potential of this novel genre and to pay greater heed to learning theory. Designers of traditional coursebooks may also consider integrating small-scale specialist lexicons within the text rather than providing a back-matter glossary. Perhaps learner's dictionaries could be enhanced with built-in vocabulary practice exercises. Similar publications using different language pairs could guide the way. We look forward to monitoring developments.

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#### Biodata:

*Geoff Toister taught EFL in Israeli high schools for 27 years, served as an occasional teacher trainer and mentor and taught online classes of adults. This background stood him in good stead when he turned to dictionary writing. Utilising his pedagogical experience and training in lexicography he recently published **Bagrut Lexicon**, an interactive resource for vocabulary building.*

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## PUTTING CHILDREN ON STAGE – IN ENGLISH

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Any child can get up on stage and sing a song or say a few words in English. Being in a show improves children's ability to communicate, builds their confidence and allows them to show everyone what they've learned.

### Why a musical?

When neither the performers nor the audience are native English speakers, a musical has advantages for both. In the case of the performers, children who are weak, shy or both in English may not want to speak on stage, but they can still sing songs with a group, which is a wonderful way to practice English. For the audience, they may not understand everything that's said but they can still enjoy the singing and dancing.

My experience putting on musicals in English began with after-school English groups. I had several groups ranging from pre-K through about 4th grade. Towards the end of the year I chose a few songs that I had taught during the year and wrote a story around them based on the vocabulary they already knew. The older children were given speaking parts and the younger children sang the songs they had learned, usually with hand motions and/or props. These were small productions which required very few rehearsals, but gave all the children a huge boost of confidence. The parents also enjoyed seeing their children on stage speaking and/or singing in English.

Six years ago, while working with advanced pupils from 4-6th grade at a local elementary school, we came up with the idea of putting on a musical. We chose the classic Peter Pan. Another teacher who had experience in drama directed, and I was in charge of the music. Although we both had theatre backgrounds, this was our first experience staging a production like this and we learned a lot along the way. I've never received so many compliments after such a disaster, and English musicals became a tradition. The teacher I worked with left the school at the end of the year for reasons unrelated to the musical, and since then I've directed five more (I'm writing this between rehearsals for Robin Hood, our current production).

One significant change that we've made involves which children participate. In the first year the top pupils in each class were chosen and rehearsals took place during school hours. The following year I decided to move rehearsals to after-school so that only serious pupils who were really interested would join. For the next two years the teachers still chose the strongest pupils, and

they were invited to join, but by the third year other pupils also asked to be in the play and were accepted. Since the fourth year the show is open to all pupils from 4-6th grade regardless of their level of English, as long as they commit to regular attendance and proper behavior at rehearsals. I'm proud to say that we do have pupils from all levels participating, from non-readers who get small parts or simply join the chorus, to advanced pupils who take on the main roles. One thing that hasn't changed is that the entire school, from 1st through 6th grade, comes to watch and see that anyone can speak English.

### How do I do it?

Now that you're convinced that you want to put on a musical in your school I'll try to take you through the steps.

#### 1. Choosing a Show

I've found that for elementary school it's important to choose a familiar, simple story. Try to find shows with simple, catchy songs. You can always add characters and scenes if you have a lot of children who want parts. I gave Snow White a dozen friends, created scenes for them and they all sang "Someday My Prince Will Come". If you work with older children find a story or subject that they can relate to.

#### 2. Start the Season

At the beginning of the year I go into each classroom and announce the show. I remind them that anyone who wants to join is invited but that they must be serious and commit attend all rehearsals. I also emphasize that they don't have to be good in English – I will find a part for everyone. Anyone who is interested gets a letter to take to their parents which includes rehearsal day and times and what is expected of their children.

At the first few meetings I explain the show and audition process and we do some drama workshops. These include improvisations based on different characters and scenes in the show. I also teach one song that most of the cast is going to sing. These meetings are a chance to help them understand what acting is about and also for me to see them in action.

#### 3. Auditions

I hold auditions for the main parts. Each child fills out an audition form telling me which part(s) they are interested in, if they just want a small part or if they don't want any speaking part at all. For each of the main parts I prepare a short monologue or dialogue

from the script. I hand out copies and they get about two weeks to prepare. I make it clear that my decision is based on English skills, acting skills, how well they fit the part, how well they prepared, and how they behaved and participated during the drama workshops. I frequently add or change characters after auditions. For example, this year I added Merry Men and Women and changed the prince to two princesses. I never finalize the script until the show is cast to allow text to be added or cut depending on the abilities and number of actors.

#### 4. Rehearsal Schedule

I hand out a rehearsal schedule about every six weeks, telling everybody what we will be working on at each rehearsal and who needs to be there. There's no point in having everybody at every rehearsal unless you really need them or you have reached the point when you can run the whole show.

#### 5. Music

Find someone who can make recordings of the music and sound effects. Decide whether or not you want to record the children singing or have them sing live. Even if you record them they should still sing on stage. When all recordings are final, put all music and sound effects on one CD, make a back-up copy, attach a numbered list of tracks, and mark by number in the script where each track should be played.

#### 6. Write it Down

There are a lot of details involved. Make sure you make notes or lists of the following:

- Stage directions – Map out the stage. Before and while you stage, make a note in your script of where and when each actor enters and exits. It helps if you are already familiar with the stage on which you will be performing. Set up your rehearsal space as close as possible to the actual stage, mark where the audience will be, and make sure everyone enters and exits in the correct place.

- Costumes – Go through the cast list and decide what costume(s) each character needs. Make a note of which items children can bring from home and what needs to be prepared.
- Props and scenery – Go through each scene, making a list of which scenery and props you need. Update the list, especially props, while you work. As with costumes, list separately the items which can be brought from home and those which need to be prepared. Make sure each child knows which props he or she needs and when.
- Cues – mark in your script all sound effects, music, scene changes, lighting changes, etc. Do this at least a week before the performance so that you can check the cues during rehearsals and make changes if necessary.

Thank yous – Hopefully you'll get a lot of help from the staff. Be sure to thank them after the show.

Remember, no matter how hard you work the kids will drive you crazy and things will go wrong. On the other hand, no one will notice the mistakes but you, the parents will be thrilled and the children will have a wonderful, meaningful experience in English that they could never get in a classroom.

#### **Bio Data:**

*Kara Aharon, aharonmk@zahav.net.il, a professional musician and a native English speaker; combines music, games, drama and other activities in English enrichment programs for all ages.*



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## SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND ELT – THE HALO EFFECT

By Nick Michelioudakis (*nickmi@ath.forthnet.gr*)

How important is one's handwriting? Hardly at all you might say, especially today when most people use a computer. Yet research shows otherwise. In a revealing experiment, a number of exam scripts were copied twice – once in good handwriting and once in bad handwriting. They were then passed on to two groups of examiners who were told to mark them and were specifically instructed to mark for content. Amazingly, the neatly-written scripts got significantly higher marks than the others (Sutherland 1992). Why did this happen? The answer is that very often when we have to assess someone (or something) and this person has a salient, positive feature, the latter colours our judgment, so we tend to formulate all kinds of positive attributions about this person, judgments which are at best only marginally related to the quality which stands out. This is called the 'Halo Effect'.

**An experiment:** One would expect the scientific world to be less susceptible to such an effect. However, in 1982, two psychologists decided to try out an interesting experiment. They selected 12 well-known journals of psychology and to each one they sent an article to be considered for publication. These articles are routinely checked by two authorities in the particular field as well as the editor. The results: in 8 out of the 12 cases the articles were deemed unworthy of publication. Out of 16 'evaluators' and 8 editors who (presumably) read them, not a single one had a different view. Well, one might say, not all articles submitted are up to par. This is true, but in this case these articles had been published in the very same journals, under the same title only a few months previously!! The only features the two psychologists had changed were the names of the authors (eminent university professors) to imaginary ones and their affiliations (originally such prestigious universities as Harvard or Princeton) to non-existent (and by definition obscure) ones! Well, you might think, at least 4 of the articles were thought to be good. Not exactly, since in 3 out of the 4 cases someone simply realised that the material had already been published... (Sutherland 1992)

Why did this happen? In all probability, it is because such journals are probably inundated with submissions from aspiring academics who are anxious to add yet another item to their CV. It is equally likely that many of these articles are run-of-the-mill, with little to recommend them. This being the case, it makes sense for the 'evaluators' to resort to 'shortcuts' (Cialdini 2001) –

rather than scrutinize each script, they look at the name of the author first. If s/he is a famous professor from an Ivy-League University, then the article is more likely to be worthy of publication. But if we start thinking like this, then an amazing change happens: as Sutherland (1992) points out, when faced with a piece of work by an established writer, we tend to look for its positive aspects, while if the writer's name is not well-known, then we start looking for flaws!

Still not convinced? Here is another example. In the mid-70s, someone sent a book to no less than 27 different publishers and literary agents. No marks for guessing what happened. All 27 rejected it. Yet this book ('Steps' by Kosinsky) had actually been published in 1969 and had won the American National Book Award! The only changes made were the title and the name of the author. What is more remarkable is that one of the publishers who rejected the 'new book' was 'Random House' – the ones who had published the original one!! (ibid.)

Lest you should think that this phenomenon is restricted to the world of books and publishing, here are some more examples to show you just how widespread it is: Good-looking people are universally thought to be friendlier, more intelligent and more humorous; tall people are thought to have all kinds of leadership qualities, they are clearly favoured in job interviews and make more money than people like me who are slightly challenged in the vertical dimension, and, of course, men of a high social status are judged by women as being more attractive... (Brehm, Kassin & Fein 2002).

**Applications in the field of teaching:** If we can create for ourselves this 'aura' of the competent/charismatic/special teacher, then we are halfway towards winning the battle for the 'hearts and minds' of our students. Here are some ideas:

**Friendliness:** When I ask my students to describe the best teacher they know, they almost invariably mention someone possessing this quality. When I try to probe deeper to see what it is about their method that is so special, my students are often stumped. It is because attitude is such a salient feature that it colours the students' perception of the teacher both as an individual and as a professional (for research on this very theme, see Alberson, Frey & Gregg 2004, p. 8)

**First impressions:** Teachers often 'save' their best techniques for later – a big mistake in my view. By using your favourite materials/techniques from the beginning,

you create a positive impression in the students' minds which will pre-dispose them favourably towards all your subsequent lessons. The tendency of first impressions to 'stick' has been demonstrated again and again (Fine 2005)

**Professionalism:** Little details like being prepared, giving an outline of your lesson in advance, revising what you did previously, showing students that there is a continuity in your sessions – all these create an impression of 'professionalism' and they are more noticeable than, say, a profound activity sequence (Lewis & Hill 1992). The point is that once you have acquired a reputation as a 'true professional', this reputation precedes you and everything you do will then be seen in this light!

**Success:** Unfortunately perhaps, teachers too are judged by results. This is particularly true in the case of one-to-one lessons. Consequently, there is a lot to be said for 'blowing your own trumpet'. This will create an expectation of success which boosts the students' confidence and acts like a self-fulfilling prophecy (Dornyei 2001).

**Titles:** As I have said in other articles and as the above experiment clearly demonstrates, titles like 'MSc', 'PhD' etc. never fail to impress people about your competence – so if you have them, flaunt them! (On how effective this 'aura' can be, see also Goldstein, Martin & Cialdini 2007). Similarly, if you happen to work for a prestigious institution, then mention it to your students. I remember how people's faces used to light up when I told them I was an Oral Examiner for the British Council!

**Looks:** At the risk of repeating myself, the importance of being good-looking can hardly be exaggerated. Not only does this quality affect the 'marks' one gets in virtually all other fields, but there is evidence that this positive pre-disposition of others actually elicits all kind of positive behaviours from them (Aronson 1999). The moral is clear: it pays to work on your appearance!

**What about ELT?** So, what about our field? Are there any elements which can create a 'Halo Effect'? Yes, there are – two of them: a) Your passport and b) your accent. Let me explain. I believe that if would-be employers receive 2 identical CVs, one from a native speaker and another from a Greek teacher, there are many cases when only the former will be short-listed. I believe that if two Greek EFL teachers are interviewed and one of them has a native-like accent while the other one does not, then the former is far more likely to be hired, even if the latter has better qualifications/more experience. I am also certain that (*ceteris paribus*) native speakers are, on average, better paid when it comes to

private lessons. Now, I do not have any hard evidence for all this, but I am prepared to bet good money that all 3 hypotheses are true. Anyone for research?

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## THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DESK

By Amanda Caplan

As my sabbatical year draws to a close, I'm looking back and reflecting on the different experiences I had this year. Which of my courses did I enjoy the most, which was the most useful, which opened up new horizons? The answer to all these questions seems to lead me to one course only, my trip to Florence, Italy to learn Italian.

I had decided that my sabbatical was going to be a year of fun and enrichment rather than serious study. However, it was important to me to include one "proper" course that would contribute directly to my teaching. I decided that I would learn a foreign language, thereby placing myself in my pupils' position – in the classroom and tongue-tied, lacking the knowledge to express myself fluently. Had I been seriously serious, I should have opted to study Arabic or Russian, courses being widely available in both languages, to meet the challenge of a different alphabet, the same challenge my pupils need to meet. However, as the main aim of my sabbatical was recharging my batteries and trying to relax, the additional stress of a new alphabet was too much. I opted out and decided to choose a European language, but which one?

Browsing through the different options, I discovered the answer, Italian! Why? Had I a life-long dream to study Italian, am I obsessed with Italian art, do I have some hidden Italian roots? No, no and no! So, why study Italian? Because I could travel to Florence in Italy for two weeks with financial assistance from the 'keren hishtalmut'! Decision made!

Plane tickets were bought, accommodation organised, the course booked, and come February, off I flew to spend two rather cold and damp weeks in Florence. What had I let myself in for?

The two-week course consisted of two lessons a day, five days a week. All the lessons were conducted in Italian only, a necessity considering the different L1s spoken by the eight students – German, Polish, French, English (yours truly) and Hebrew (yours truly's husband). The early morning lesson, from 9:00-10:30 was a grammar lesson, and the second lesson, conversation, was from 10:45-12:15. The rest of the day was free, sometimes filled with trips organised by the language school, or with my own plans (a visit to the beautiful synagogue, walks across the river, and, I must admit, rather a lot of window shopping!).

The first morning, the first grammar lesson, the first task – to copy down the verb 'to be' in Italian. I was stunned – was the teacher serious? The other students were busily copying, so I realised that she was, and set to work. We

then learnt to say "I am from Israel. I am a teacher" and other introductory sentences using this verb. Then we moved on to the verb, yes, you guessed, 'to have'. "He has three children", "I have a car". Suddenly I felt that I was 11 years old again, in my first French lesson in London. This is exactly the way that I was taught French, several decades ago – has nothing really changed since then? But wait a minute, I KNOW that things have changed. I KNOW that when Israeli English teachers walk into third or fourth grade classes they teach vocabulary chunks, cognates, useful phrases like 'good morning'.

At the end of the lesson, we were assigned some homework – the kind of completion exercises that we're all familiar with. So, grammar was over for the day.

"Great", I thought, "Now we'll have a conversation class. That'll be more like what I'm expecting". Wrong again! Our teacher handed us a photocopied dialogue worksheet which we read, and filled in the blank spaces with words from a word bank. This time my flashback was to my early days of EFL teaching in Israel – more than two decades ago. And trust me, the worksheet looked as if it had been photocopied for the last twenty years too! End of conversation lesson.

We were now free to return to our comfortable, warm and dry apartment, located ten minutes' walk from the school, in the centre of historical Florence, five minutes' walk from the Duomo, two minutes from a well-stocked supermarket (with great pasta!), and one minute from the most amazing chestnut ice cream. This is what being in Italy is about!

Time to do my homework! I can honestly say it took me less than ten minutes. I sat with the verbs 'to be' and 'to have' conjugated in front of me, understood which person each sentence required and filled in the blanks. No need to understand the rest of the sentence, no need to even read it.

That done, it was time to explore Florence on foot – a wonderful experience and so relaxing, knowing that I had a full two weeks to savour the city.

Day two of studies dawned and again we started with the grammar lesson. The teacher asked each one of us to read our answer to the question. The student on the left read answer 1, his wife read answer 2, I read answer 3 and so on till all eight of us had read. Then, surprise, we started back with the first student, and continued checking the homework for 40 minutes. I worked out which questions were going to be 'my' questions and

stopped listening to the other students; it was so boring. Surely there had to be a better way to review the homework (pairs, groups?) or maybe the homework itself wasn't a useful task. Even with our limited Italian we could have produced some sentences of our own. Surely that would have been more entertaining and we'd have certainly had to think more, furthering better learning.

Day two's conversation lesson looked promising at the start. Each student was asked to write the name of a famous person on a piece of paper and then stick it on another student's forehead. Then we had to ask yes / no questions to work out the name on our forehead. I automatically stood up. Surely this was an activity that involved walking around the classroom. Yet again, I was wrong! Feeling somewhat foolish, I slunk back into my seat. We then took it in turns to ask our questions, and the class chorused 'Yes' or 'No' as appropriate. Again, boredom reigned.

And so it went on, day in, day out for ten days. At the end of the course I looked back and asked myself some questions. Had I learnt any Italian? Yes! Could I converse with a native speaker of Italian (not one who enunciates every syllable carefully)? No! Could I shop for basic commodities? No! So maybe I'd hadn't really learnt any Italian! But why not? Was it just because I wasn't a serious student or did the teaching methodology have anything to do with the problem?

Had the teachers prepared their lessons? Yes. Did they know Italian? Yes. Did they know how to teach a language? Ah, this might be the answer as to why I learned so little. We studied grammar and we studied conversation, but what was missing? Firstly, vocabulary. I had few words to slot into the grammar structures that I'd learnt. To talk, I needed words not rules. Secondly, we wasted a lot of time doing useless exercises, going over grammar homework, and sitting passively in the classroom. This combination led to a lack of motivation on my part which certainly hindered my learning process.

Returning to the questions I asked myself at the beginning of this ramble: Which of my courses did I enjoy the most, which was the most useful, which opened up new horizons? If I didn't learn much Italian, why was the Italian course the answer to all these questions? I enjoyed the course because I was in Florence, this requires no explanation. But why was the course useful and broadening? The answer to that lies in the fact that I was sitting on the other side of the table in a language class. Here are my insights:

1. For a long time now, I've advocated that grammar exercises have a limited use, that checking each and everyone frontally in class is deadly boring. Having sat on the other side of the desk, for our pupils' sakes, it was clear to me that we have to stop doing this.

2. I've read lots of academic articles on the importance of vocabulary teaching, especially chunks in language acquisition and have never questioned them. Sitting on the other side taught me that they are 100% correct!

3. We expect our students to sit still at their desks for hours every day. Italian classroom chairs are more comfortable than those in our classrooms, and I couldn't sit still. Legitimize moving around; group work can be done standing; let pupils write vocabulary on the board; hang texts round the classroom to make a change from reading from the textbook.

4. Pupils need dynamic lessons, literally (as in 3 above) and figuratively, as in lessons that move at a fast pace. Teach vocabulary all lesson, but teach it in five different ways. Boredom kills motivation quicker than lack of success.

So what did I learn from sitting on the other side of the desk? A little Italian, maybe, but more importantly, I have more insight into my pupils' struggle with a foreign language, and an understanding of how I can help them overcome the challenges that learning a new language demands.

#### **Bio Data:**

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



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## DIGITAL LITERACIES &amp; THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM (PART 2)

Gavin Dudeney

*Editor's Preface*

*The following is a text version combining the contents of several presentations made by Gavin Dudeney at the British Council Pre-Conference Workshop and the ETAI International Conference, held in the summer of 2012. Due to the length of the article, we have published it in the Forum in two parts – the first part appeared in the Winter 2012 issue. This is the second part.*

*In the first part of the article, Gavin discussed how he uses digital literacies to work with images and video. In this, the second part of the article you will be reading about digital audio and lexical tools.*

**Working with audio**

As with video, audio can be a great way for learners to get more practice with the language without direct teacher intervention. Apart from offering learners exposure to more authentic language by way of audio recordings and podcasts freely-available on the web, teachers can also engage them in language production using audio recording and sharing websites and free audio recording software.

Giving learners control over audio reproduction allows them to work at their own pace and to get what they need from listening material, whilst authentic material from websites and broadcasters such as the BBC and CNN can provide engaging materials to work with.

With the explosion in podcasting (via iTunes and other distribution channels), teachers can easily find and select appropriate listening materials on a per-learner basis and, with a measure of artifice, even manage to get them on to their mobile phones or portable media players, encouraging them to listen to some English in between other media such as their favourite music.

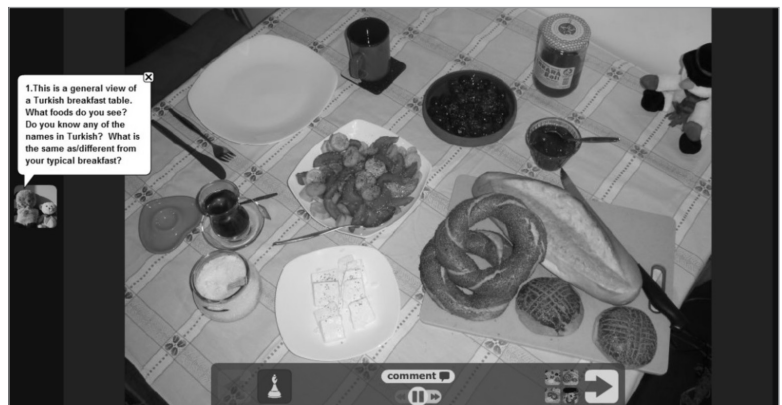
By recording and editing their own audio, learners can rehearse and refine conversations, interviews and presentations, leading to an increase in proficiency as well as confidence. Podomatic (<http://tinyurl.com/yfyv45d>) allows learners to create and share their own podcasts (or short audio recordings) with anyone globally. Learners can not only record and broadcast themselves (to the public, or a selected audience) but can get feedback on their output by way of the 'comments' facility Podomatic incorporates.

One example of this kind of project run by Carla Arena<sup>1</sup> made use of Podomatic to ask learners to record excuses for not having done their homework. The excuses and recordings are both creative and enjoyable, but it is the feedback that learners got from global visitors which adds an extra layer of engagement to the activity. Taking language production outside the classroom in this manner provides a different degree of motivation and, in many cases, a different investment in terms of the quality of output. Encouraging learners to think carefully about what they produce, and why, is often an added bonus of web 2.0 tools which speak to a wider audience.

For more on the use of podcasts in ELT see Graham Stanley's article on the British Council Teaching English Website<sup>2</sup>.

**Sample Class**

Our sample activity involves another tool, Voicethread. With Voicethread you can combine documents, photos and videos to create stimulating multimedia projects, presentations and teaching aids accompanied by a recorded audio commentary. An example of one made by an American teacher living in Turkey can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/ydy2gu7>. You will see that the teacher combines images, audio commentary and notes on the side of the video window as well as the hand written vocabulary key cards in the presentation itself.



<sup>1</sup> Arena, C., Level 4 Transmitting - Loud & Clear. Retrieved January 11, 2010 from <http://tinyurl.com/yavnx5w>

<sup>2</sup> Stanley, G., Podcasting for ELT. Retrieved January 11, 2010 from <http://tinyurl.com/4n9wxy>

This activity involves learners preparing and scripting a presentation of their own, about a subject which inspires them, perhaps a hobby or interest. In order to make their presentation they will need to research the subject, source suitable royalty-free or Creative Commons images<sup>3</sup>, prepare their script and record the presentation using Voice thread.

This kind of activity is a welcome change from more traditional ways of presenting such as the American idea of 'show and tell' and, again, allows for multiple edits as well as feedback from a global audience.

#### Audio sites

- **Podomatic** - <http://tinyurl.com/2yseuf>
- **Voxopop** - <http://tinyurl.com/yjp2afg>
- **Voicethread** - <http://tinyurl.com/2jbnxz>
- **Audacity** - <http://tinyurl.com/7xp2v>

#### Working with words

In dealing with vocabulary and more productive activities such as creative writing there are various tools at the disposal of the wired teacher, from word clouds, through more structured sites such as blogs and wikis to higher-level tools such as online concordancers.

In the case of word clouds, these can make vocabulary more memorable and can significantly impact on levels of engagement for reading and listening texts as well as post-reading and listening activities involving language production.

Blogs make for structured writing projects as well as collaborative and inter-cultural projects and wikis can be a great aid to process writing activities, allowing – as they do – for multiple revisions and various levels of peer and teacher correction.

Concordancers allow advanced learners to get to grips with more detailed areas of language usage, and are ideal for discovery-style language and vocabulary activities where learners can be encouraged to investigate and draw their own conclusions about usage, collocations and similar aspects of the language. Although concordancers work best when learners already have a fair degree of knowledge, they can – with some creative thought, and by limiting searches and results – also be used to great effect at lower levels.

#### Sample class

Since a lot of what is done in this area often involves shorter activities, here we offer a couple of samples of using online tools to deal with vocabulary. The first looks at word clouds, the second at concordancers.

Word clouds present vocabulary in an attractive and memorable format. In this sample, learners are presented with the following word cloud and asked to guess what the article they are going to read is about:



[image courtesy <http://www.wordle.net>]

<sup>3</sup> For more on Creative Commons licences, and Creative Commons image searches, see the Creative Commons website. Retrieved January 11, 2010 from: <http://tinyurl.com/3d3c8r>

Wordle takes a text and makes images like the one above. The more common the word in the original text, the bigger it will appear in the word cloud. Thus from the example above we can infer that the article is about Barcelona, a city in Spain, on the Mediterranean, etc. We might even try creating a sample text using the words in the cloud, before reading. You can find the original text about Barcelona on the Simple English version of Wikipedia (<http://tinyurl.com/ybe2jqt>), which is designed for readers whose first language is not English.

This is a motivating way of reviewing vocabulary or introducing new vocabulary and of helping learners approach texts in various formats. Word clouds can also be used after working with texts, for reconstruction purposes as well as for working with specific structures such as question forms:

A powerful concordancer online, on the other hand, allows learners to work with large amounts of English and use the data they access to work out usage 'rules', collocations and other more advanced facets of the language. Concordancers search large databases (corpora) of written or spoken language and display results in the following way:

001. of reply to Mr 's counter motion. Well Mr took a	terrific	swipe at us and I think I couldn't possib
002. y the most atrocious furniture can't you? And pay a	terrific	amount of money for it Mm and you
003. time! And you got a seat this time . Good! That's	terrific!	I got one of those square seats. A square
004. no er, no you don't Comet they're chosen they're	terrific	er no, well they're closing down for the,
005. er cabbages and things at her back door Oh he was	terrific,	he had green fingers oh yeah then he got

Here we searched for examples of the word 'terrific', a word that some Spanish speakers may have trouble with (terrific, terrifying). The concordancer returns some examples (in this case it is from the British National Corpus of Spoken English), with a little context before and after the word searched for. From the results, learners should be able to work out some very general rules for when 'terrific' is used.

Higher level learners will benefit from this kind of exposure to large quantities of real language but, as noted above, concordancers can also be used with lower levels. An example of such an activity might be the following:

001. He said well you've been right	since	Christmas and if you say it's
002. is. Aren't you? No I haven't been out	since	Boxing night! Wh what are you
003. secret. Obviously the law has been updated	since	eighteen ninety three. The one
004. wife and that he had been with her	since	erm she was twelve. The problem
005. You know what, I had haven't sat down	since	half past seven. What you do is,
006. how old it was. Mm So he said oh no	since	I left. I said well I, I'd still
007. And lives on there. Well I've known Derek	since	I was six weeks old. I was taken
008. pic which the EEF has been promoting hard	since	last October. We've been doing
009. Act which, and we've had that law	since	nineteen sixty eight. So we've
010. asking. I'm, I'm asking, I've been here	since	Saturday now I've sat here
001. bits in there for her a few kittens in there	for	a couple of days I, so they'd
002. they're married and they've been married	for	a couple of years I reckon,
003. going, you should of said oh I just come up	for	a few days. Blair had to look
004. your toes. We've still got that tape	for	a couple of a weeks. Haven't
005. we do, but when he goes back to work now	for	a couple of days it'll take
006. of February er so. So he was only in	for	a couple of days then?
007. mate! Are you cheeky! Had a sore throat	for	a couple of days! Hiya
008. yeah that way. It won't be like it	for	a couple of years. But he's
009. who's friend of Mat's? That's right yeah,	for	a little bit, I was on about
010. that'll say ah yeah we've been doing this	for	a little while, why don't we

Here we have done two concordances, one on the word 'since' and one on the word 'for'. We have then edited the results to make them more suitable to our lower level class, who now have the job of working out when we use these two words from the contextualised examples they have been given.

#### Word sites

- **Wordle** - <http://tinyurl.com/6hcf9f>
- **Corpus Concordance English** - <http://tinyurl.com/6y3muw>
- **Vocab Grabber** - <http://tinyurl.com/ck65mu>
- **Wordsift** - <http://tinyurl.com/o3uc7c>
- **Word Magnets** - <http://tinyurl.com/quae8c>
- **VisuWords** - <http://tinyurl.com/2zc4z6>
- **Edublogs** - <http://tinyurl.com/ytgznw>
- **PBWorks** - <http://tinyurl.com/y9j5oyb>

#### Conclusion

In this article we have looked at the changing face of today's learners with particular reference to evolving digital literacies, and at ways in which teachers can address these literacies through the use of simple creative technologies in class.

We saw that although younger learners (the so-called 'digital natives') are comfortable with technology, they are not necessarily adept at using it for learning, preferring to use it for communication with peers. In this sense we can characterise the Net generation as 'tech comfy' (comfortable with technology), rather than 'tech savvy'.

We discussed how teachers can integrate a range of free web-based tools into their current teaching practice. Integrating technology into teaching does not necessarily mean having to embrace an entirely new approach to pedagogy. Simple tools and websites can serve well as a first step to integrating technology into teaching, with the use of more complex tools that rely on user-generated content (such as blogs or wikis) being implemented with learners later on, once both parties have become accustomed to the presence of technology in the classroom context.

We also outlined a number of digital literacies in the article, such as print and texting literacies, collaborative and intercultural literacies, information and search literacies, and finally remix literacies – we saw how these are fundamental skills needed by learners for the knowledge society we now inhabit. We suggested that the teacher's role is to help learners acquire these literacies, and that this can be done through the integration of a range of practical activities based on a range of technologies. We provided example activities in the form of sample classes, in which teachers and learners work with web pages, images, audio and video, and a number of other miscellaneous online tools.

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## DIGITEACHING READING IN 50 STORIES: A SNEAK PREVIEW OF THE ENGLISH CLUB APP

by Fern Levitt ([flevitt@mindspring.com](mailto:flevitt@mindspring.com))

At the ETAI Spring Conference in Yaffo, we gave a sneak preview of The English Club app we are developing for use on the iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch and asked the workshop participants for their feedback. The teachers who attended the workshop were particularly interested in using newly available technologies for helping learners, and were enthusiastic about the potential for harnessing the power of personal mobile devices to learn basic English skills by a proven, effective method.

The English Club follows the learning program of the Hickey Method, familiar in Israel since an emissary from England taught it to the first group of English teachers in Israel in 1991. I learned the method from my own mentor who was in that first group, Susie Secemski, and have been teaching the Hickey Method to English teachers and tutors since 2006. I know from experience with my own English students and from the reports of the tutors and teachers whom I have instructed, that this structured, multi-sensory, phonics-integrated-with-irregular-whole-words-and-meaningful-texts (or "synthetic phonics") approach is effective in helping learners. Even those who are struggling due to language learning issues or cultural disadvantages, have overcome the obstacles to developing basic English literacy. (To learn more about the method, look for the full set of free materials on the English Department website of David Yellin College, at [http://dye.macam.ac.il/dyellin\\_open.htm](http://dye.macam.ac.il/dyellin_open.htm). Click on Hickey Website, then scroll down and click Documents for Download, then Individual Lesson Materials.)

The English Club app incorporates all the material of the first fifty Hickey lessons – all the letters and the most common letter combinations, their sounds, names, and how to write them; 37 English rules that support decoding, spelling and comprehension; 50 stories, illustrated to scaffold comprehension, each with the most exciting plot I could invent given the fact that each story only uses the letters and combinations that have been taught up to that lesson; and about 700 individual words for reading fluency and spelling practice, with their illustrated definitions to reinforce comprehension. (The word list is based on the "Top 500 Most-Used Words" list published by the Center for Applied Research in Education, since, as Amanda Caplan pointed out in her recent ETAI Forum article (Fall 2012), *An Experiment in Vocabulary Teaching*, "EFL students need to learn the most frequently used lexical items to function in the target language.")

The multi-sensory and interactive features of the mobile devices on which it operates, provide sound, images and

movement, the ability to write on-screen with your finger and a friendly and easy-to-use, non-threatening and self-checking environment for aspiring English learners. The app can be used completely independently – it is self-explanatory – but of course learners will benefit greatly from having the guidance, additional explanation and support of a teacher or tutor accompanying them as they use the app.

The teachers attending the workshop were enthusiastic about the app's potential, and felt that it will be a good resource to use in lessons and for practice between lessons. They were glad to see features that they believe their students and pupils will love. In particular, the teachers commented on the app's voice, which they described as that of a friendly teenager, rather than an authoritative adult, so it sounds like a friend offering information and correct pronunciation of the English texts. Perhaps most striking to them was that the app is designed to be as much like a game as possible and to give learners the sense of accomplishment and satisfaction which they get from playing interactive electronic games. They need to complete the challenges of one level and earn enough game points to unlock the next level; they earn medals for their achievements, and can check Apple's Game Board to see how their achievements compare with other players. The app is colorful, provides a lot of free movement within each level, and is a more fun way to practice than we could previously offer using paper cards.

We have deliberately provided rewards and challenges so that learners can succeed. For example, there are three game modes: "relaxed" mode for learners who may need more time to decide on an answer and don't enjoy an adrenalin rush from the additional stress of a ticking clock – they can keep playing for as long as they like; "beat the clock" mode in which the learner is challenged to find as many right answers as possible in one minute; and "three mistakes" mode in which you keep playing until you've given three wrong answers and are notified automatically "Game Over!". So, with enough investment of time and practice, learners of all levels of capability, should find the app engaging and helpful. I believe (and upcoming user experiments will demonstrate whether this is true) that all types of beginning EFL learners can benefit from the app – some learners will zoom ahead through the levels, and some will take longer to master and integrate the material and develop their skills.



We consulted with the workshop participants about various aspects of the interface, and the unanimous conclusion was that we should have no fear. Today's kids are so at ease with these devices that they will be comfortable experimenting and figuring out what every screen icon in the app does. They should have no problem determining which gestures (the term for the finger taps, flicks, pinches and zooms used to operate a touch screen) they will need to work the app. Nevertheless, we are providing a tutorial film with the app especially for those of us who are not "digital natives" and need more guidance in how to use these tools.

The current version of the app has the option of an all-English or Hebrew, localized interface and translation. (Soon we will add an Arabic option as well.) The characters in the app and stories are a multi-cultural, mixed age group of extended family and friends, to whom we hope all learners will be able to relate. While the app's illustrations are mostly of families with children, we hope that adults who are beginning EFL students, and who need to acquire basic literacy skills of reading, writing, spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary and comprehension will find the app helpful as well.

The workshop participants appreciated the fact that our illustrator, Julia Filipone-Erez, is originally an educator, with an MA in History and Education, and that her illustrations, besides being charming, are pedagogically consistent and shed light on the meaning of the text. For example, we developed picture conventions for the more abstract aspects of language: a way to differentiate between the base form of a verb (e.g. "sit") and its past simple form ("sat"); a way to differentiate between subject pronouns ("I") and object pronouns ("me") with different visual cues in the illustrations.

Shani Hajbi, the app developer who presented with me at the workshop, is also originally an educator, with an MA in Instructional Design and Curriculum Development from Ben Gurion University. He has made every decision about how the app should work, with educational goals in mind, given his understanding of what will be maximally engaging and hold the interest of our users.

We have great hopes that this app will use the prodigious powers of mobile technology to advance us toward our goal of helping our students master the essential skills of basic English. Once they get over the hurdle of reading, writing, and basic comprehension, they can move forward to confidently enjoy authentic literature and get much more out of their English classes in school.

We anticipate releasing our next beta version in the very near future, and plan to submit the app to the Apple App Store for their approval shortly after that. Stay tuned – if you would like to be notified when the app is available from the App Store, you can check the website at [www.englishclubapp.com](http://www.englishclubapp.com) or write to us at [info@englishclubapp.com](mailto:info@englishclubapp.com).

We look forward to presenting the app again at an upcoming ETAI conference – and hopefully next time you will give us feedback from your experiences with your students!

At the conference, we demonstrated the app with the first ten lessons. I'd like to show you here the fiftieth story (in the app, the illustrations are in color). By working through all 50 levels of the app (see below), this is the level of reading that the learner can attain, starting with no English reading knowledge at all,

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בס"ד



## מסלול לתואר שני (M.Ed.) בהוראת אנגלית\*

### TEACHING ENGLISH IN A DIGITAL AGE

\* בהיתר המועצה להשכלה גבוהה

פרופ' עלית אולשטיין  
גב' גבי שושני

ראש התכנית:  
מרכזת התכנית:

### Description

A two-year program in English for English teachers  
More information at <http://www.shaanan.ac.il>

### Goals

Graduates will be able to address students' needs and the changing needs of society in a digital age, and act as leaders in their schools and in the wider sphere of education.

### Entrance requirements

- Teaching certificate
- Three years teaching experience
- B.Ed. or B.A.

*Supplementary courses in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics may be required.*



"שאנן" - מורשת להכשרת מנהיגות חינוכית

## TEACHING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE THROUGH LITERATURE

Aviva L. Shapiro (*shapiroaviva@gmail.com*)

In the spring of 2012, I was lucky to be chosen to attend the IATEFL conference in Glasgow, Scotland. IATEFL stands for *International Association for Teachers of English as Foreign Language*. There I also presented a talk about how to teach English through Literature, which I also presented at the ETAI conference. Teaching literature is now a written part of our matriculation exam and since teachers are required to teach literature I felt it was important to discuss the ways that we can use literature more effectively to teach English.

Through teaching of authentic English, in this case literature originally written in English, we can augment both our students' level of English and their understanding of other cultures. We are one of the few countries where literature is taught as part of the English as a foreign language program. This gives us a huge advantage in helping our pupils acquire the language. Even though this may make teaching English somewhat more complicated and perhaps even stressful, as some would say, it also raises the level of the language our pupils are interacting with and thus leads to more genuine teaching of the English language.

When teaching English as a foreign language as we do here in Israel, it is important to know what our ultimate goal is. This is to prepare our students to live in the world where English is the lingua franca and the most useful tool we can give them to succeed in their lives. Whether they move abroad or remain here in Israel, they will need English for communication in their daily lives whether via the internet, or face-to-face.

As we teach literature, we need to see it not as a part of the English curriculum but as vehicle to teach our pupils the language. We need to learn not to be afraid to challenge ourselves and our pupils. Teaching pupils authentic literature in English is not easy for the teachers as there has to be a lot of intervention in order to help the weaker pupils understand, but in the long run, all of our students reach a higher level of English by also studying literature and benefit immensely.

When teaching literature to students whose mother tongue is not English the teacher has to be willing to step outside of her comfort zone. Many English teachers do not feel comfortable teaching literature as they are not confident that they understand the language, the meaning or how to analyze the piece of literature themselves. Most English as foreign language teachers,

both native and non-native speakers of English, have not been trained as literature teachers. So, clearly, when they go into a classroom feeling less than capable, it hinders their ability to teach literature confidently.

My suggestion to these teachers is to relax and enjoy. It is not necessary to be a trained literature teacher to teach literature to foreign language students. A bit of preparation is needed. First of all, practice reading the poem, story or novel beforehand. Reading aloud the pieces of literature to the students even if they are near native speakers is advisable. Although this is time consuming, in the long run hearing the literary piece read out loud helps with comprehension. One can use a recording when available.

Reading out loud should be slow enough for all pupils to follow and the reading should be done in stages. Before the reading, map out how to "chunk" the reading. After reading each "chunk" stop and ask basic comprehension questions and explain where needed. Even the stronger students gain more by listening and sharing in the class discussion after each section is read out loud.

With students whose English is quite weak, some mother tongue use can ensure that the main idea of the story or the gist is clear. However, the students do understand well enough, with teaching vocabulary and reading short "chunks".

Through literature, students learn new vocabulary, sharpen their listening comprehension and improve their ability to express themselves both in writing and speaking. This is because the students work on writing throughout the process of studying literature in a post reading activity of writing a letter to the author or one of the characters, or simply answering analysis questions using the HOTS.

Furthermore, our new literature program has a lot of room for creative work which allows the weaker students to express themselves and gain confidence in English. Once they have this confidence they are more likely to want to learn and succeed! Although I don't encourage teaching grammar through literature, while reading the literature we can point out many grammar points we have taught previously. For example, if we have taught the present perfect, we can draw the students' attention to how it is used in the story. This shows our students that what they learn is used as real language and aids them in comprehension.

In conclusion, through the use of literature we not only expand our students' horizons, allow them to express themselves and connect the stories to their own lives, but we show them that English is more than just texting or sending messages on Facebook. Don't teach literature just "to get it done", use it to enhance your students' lives and truly improve their English so they too can be citizens of the world.

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## RELEVANT RESEARCH

### FIRST OR SECOND LANGUAGE IN THE CLASSROOM. DOES IT MATTER?

Mira Brown ([mira@muelc.edu.au](mailto:mira@muelc.edu.au))

How much first language do we use in our classroom? Should we minimize our use of it as trainers and should we discourage our language learners from using it? These are very controversial questions which in recent years have led to discussion and even change in teaching methodology. In recent decades theories of second language acquisition indicate that students' linguistic growth is related to the amount of time spent with the language in meaningful exposure to it. Krashen (1982) refers to this as "comprehensible input". Opportunities to communicate in the target language are also cited as important to developing oral proficiency. Met and Rhodes (1990) note that both research and experiential data suggest that the amount of time spent on language learning and the intensity of the experience have substantial effects on the acquisition of significant levels of foreign language proficiency.

However more recent findings suggest that the L1 (first language) in an L2 (second or target language) classroom has value as a learning tool. Empirical studies have been conducted by Storch & Wigglesworth, (2003), Brooks and Danato (1994), Anton & DiCamilla (1998) that suggest that using L1 enables cognitive scaffolding, thus helping students to analyse and develop a deeper understanding which results in a higher level of instructional efficiency than would otherwise be obtained if using the target language only.

It is the purpose of this paper to suggest that total immersion using the target language has consistently been shown to be the most effective and efficient language learning method and yet research has revealed that there is pedagogical and physiological value of using L1 in the language classroom. If this research is correct then there must be at some point a declining

value in the use of L1 and supposedly the overuse of L1 does have its disadvantages. It may be useful to reflect on what may be the optimal level of L1 and where in our methodology it is most valuable. Furthermore it may be worthwhile to consider the many determining factors such as age or existing mastery of the target language that may influence that amount of first language used. Factors such as the amount of exposure to the target language are also important criteria to ascertain how much L1 we may consider as useful.

The twentieth century has seen flux and change in the fashion of second language acquisition, however certain basic assumptions were accepted by most language teachers and among them is the belief that spoken language is more fundamental than written, explicit teaching of grammar should be avoided and language should be taught as a complete unit rather than as separate parts (Cook, 2001). The communicative approach has become established practice because of both its pedagogical and psychological value.

In terms of ideal pedagogical outcomes, the focus on L2 is ideal because of its potential to maximise learners' "opportunities to achieve language skills in the target language." (Krashen, 1982). Ellis, as cited in Pan (2009) argues that second language or foreign language teachers who overuse the L1 deprive learners of valuable target language input. She suggests that trying to 'figure out' or cope with what the teacher and others say to them is an important part of language learning processes. She also suggests that learners who are used to hearing their teacher use the L1 tend to ignore the target language and therefore do not benefit fully from valuable target language input.

Furthermore, the target language instils motivation. Students realize that the target language could actually be used in real life and not in some distant future point. This motivation leads to enjoyment and success.

Finally another reason there has been such a focus on L2 dominance in the English teaching classroom is that most English teaching has its roots in English speaking countries such as the USA, Canada, England and Australia as ESL. Classes are multicultural consisting of students who come from different countries, are linguistically diverse and represent a multitude of cultures. Students are allocated to different classes according to their proficiency in English and not their ethnic background. Moreover, the power of English is such that monolingual English speakers can teach English anywhere in the world. Consequently, these teachers do not have sufficient knowledge of L1 to be able to use it in their teaching.

From theoretical perspectives on second language acquisition, there is a good deal of empirical evidence to give persuasive support to the argument that teachers should aim to use the target language as much as possible, and, by doing so, have a positive effect on learners' L2 proficiency. Yet, despite the abundance of evidence to support L2 use in the classroom, Levine (2003) notes that almost all researchers e.g. Guthrie 1984, Polio & Duff 1990, Nzwanger 2000, and more recently Turnbull & Arnett 2002, all as cited in Lai Ping (2009) found that both students and teachers appealed to "codeswitching" for a number of reasons even in the attempt to avoid it.

Not only is codeswitching a natural course of progression in language learning but empirical studies have shown that the L1 is a valuable and beneficial resource in classrooms and can facilitate L2 learning (Anton & DiCamilla, 1998; Brooks & Donato, 1994; Chau, 2001; Nation, 2003; Murray & Wigglesworth, 2005; Schweers, 1999; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003; Swain & Lapkin, 2000) as cited in Lai Ping (2009).

The use of the L1 in an appropriate manner may be a cognitive bridge to the L2 helping learners to analyse language and work at a more demanding level than using L2 only. (Lai Ping 2009) One argument is that L2 learners should learn language in the same communicative way that children learn but Cook (2009) argues that adults are very different learners. Their mature minds respond to previous experience and they need to compare what they learn with what they already know using L1. Research conducted by Bruner as cited in Ping, (2009) has shown that assistance in the form of L1 may enable L2 learner to accomplish activities which would otherwise have been too complex to achieve. The scaffolding provided by the teacher in the form of L1, to

work out instructions, resolve the learners' questions and thus obtain understanding to complete activities helps to heighten L2 acquisition in all skills. Both Wigglesworth 2003 & Auerbach 1993 as cited in Ping, (2009) argue that when using L1 to ask for explanation if they cannot understand, students in a bilingual program improve more rapidly. Studies conducted by both Tang (2002) and Schweers (1999) as cited by Pan (2010) conclude that both students and teacher prefer to use the L1 when introducing new vocabulary, especially when explicating the fine distinction between two similar words, and when discussing grammatical points and the content of reading. According to the study conducted by Tang in 2002, this was the main reason for "codeswitching" in the classroom.

Another reason for the use of L1 is that as a language tool, it has substantial psychological benefits to students in language learning. According to Ping (2009), it provides a cognitive and social space where students are at ease to help each other. Students maintain a sense of security and incur reduced anxiety when learning. Furthermore, using L1 may improve students' self-esteem by preventing floundering in their learning activity. The presence of a bilingual teacher reduces frustration for both the teacher and the student.

To further complicate the issue, there are other mitigating factors that influence the preference to use L1 in the L2 class. Factors that need to be considered are the age of the student, their mastery of the second language and finally the amount of time available to learn the target language.

The age of students is a vital factor to consider in reference to L1 input within the language classroom. Theories of adult education show that mature students need to refer to prior experience and what they already know when learning new concepts. According to Ping (2009), students who are older need to enquire about the technical and logical reasoning behind what they learn and this they need to do in L1 in most cases. There is a desire to develop a communicative relationship with the teacher that can more easily be achieved by using L1. Research conducted by Ping (2009) indicated that limited L1 in the classroom of mature students leave students frustrated because explanations are necessary in L1. Furthermore, according to Ping, statistics show that L2 only classrooms are not the preferred setting of this group and if given a choice they would prefer a bilingual teacher. On the other hand, younger students generally are more receptive to a L2 classroom because their learning is optimised with more time using the target language. Seng and Hashim 2006 as cited in Pan (2010) indicate that students who usually have difficulty with language

acquisition and lacked confidence and accuracy should be allowed to fall back to L1 to understand the target language. If both languages are used in a meaningful communication, students are more willing to sustain verbal communication rather than fall into silence.

The amount of time available to learn the target language is often crucial, especially in foreign language classrooms so it is vital for teachers to use L2 as much as possible in contexts in which students spend only short periods of time in class on a daily basis, and when they have little contact with L2 outside the classroom. Relying too heavily on the L1 when instructional time is limited by program design would be an unfortunate waste of time and would likely lead to student demotivation, as MacDonald (1993) suggests. However, research conducted by Cook (2001), Swain & Lapkin (2000) has shown that reverting back to L1 is an efficient and effective means by which to cover important instructions.

Cook suggests that teachers should be granted licence to what they now feel guilty about doing, namely falling back to L1. There are many methods that actively create links between L1 and L2 Teachers often worry that students revert to L1 when in pair work but studies (e.g. Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003) that investigated learners' use of their L1 in pair activities have found that learners use the L1 sparingly. Furthermore, team work empowers students to provide each other with assistance. Their studies have shown that team work facilitates students' willingness to negotiate metalinguistic knowledge, which aids in evaluating and understanding the meaning of the text. Team work also contributes to initiating and maintaining interrelationships, and to building shared perspectives to achieve goals.

Despite the recommendation of judicious use of L1 to enhance language learning researchers (Cook 2001; Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Turnbull 2001) also warn against the overuse of L1, proposing that it be used optimally. Cook (2001) has proposed four guidelines for teachers. The first is efficiency. Teachers should consider which things can be done more effectively in L1 like introducing complicated vocabulary. The second is learning. Explanations in L1 alongside the L2 may make certain points easier to understand, like grammatical points. The third is naturalness. The teacher may wish to create an environment of rapport by showing concern for their students in L1. The fourth is external relevance. The student may need to use both languages for specific functions beyond the classroom, like pursuing career objectives or cultural understanding.

As we have seen the use of L1 should not be prohibited from the language classroom. It serves as a tool which can enhance second language learning. However, L1 use

should not be actively encouraged as it may substitute, rather than support, second language use. It is important that guidelines for language teachers continue to encourage use of the target language as much as possible. In addition to these guidelines, teacher educators should also help teachers make judicious decisions about how and when to use the L1 while maximizing the target language use. The decision on how much first language to use is not easily determined. Far more research is required to understand complex learner characteristics to determine optimal L1 use in the L2 classroom.

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## LEAVING THE MAZE OF DYSLEXIA AND ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER (ADD)

By Renee Wahl (*wahlrenew@gmail.com*)

Anyone who is in the field of teaching can testify to the frustration of trying to deal with the ever increasing number of pupils who have attention deficit disorders or whose dyslexia manifests itself (if not before) as soon as they begin learning a second language. As English teachers and parents of such pupils, you no doubt share my quest for an effective and efficient way to help these pupils. In fact, I have been searching for such a method or combination of methods since I began to recognize the symptoms.

Among the approaches I've studied and used are remedial lessons, instrumental enrichment, Hickey, and phonics and I'm sure you can add to the list. Each method offers an effective solution but they all suffer from the same flaws – they do not get to the underlying cause of the problem and they are not efficient. What this means is that the process of remediation usually lasts longer than the pupil's motivation and exceeds the parents' budget.

Wouldn't it be great if we could understand why Jonathan can't read (English and/or Hebrew), remember the multiplication table, organize his studying, concentrate or sit still in class, as all caused by an underlying problem? From what researchers have learned through non-invasive MRI brain studies over the past 20 years, and the application of this knowledge by a dedicated mother of an extremely dyslectic son, Jonathan's problems can be solved effectively AND efficiently. Not only that, but with the same method, good pupils can achieve academic excellence, people suffering from stroke or brain trauma can dramatically recover cognitive power, sportspeople can excel in their field, the elderly can improve their memory, musicians can move to a higher level of performance, young children can be prepared for a smooth transition to the first grade, and much more.

We are not talking about a wonder pill or a piece of science fiction technology. The method is based on understanding how the brain uses different types of brain waves for different tasks, how to self-regulate these waves and apply them to different tasks. It involves learning how to perceive and interpret two dimensional forms in a three dimensional world (the skill necessary for decoding and reading texts), and how to form or strengthen brain pathways that are not being used. The scientific name for this is the neuro-cognitive approach. What it does is to help coordinate the way different parts of the brain function together. What the founder of this technique discovered is that certain types of movement stimulate this coordination.

The next thing you need to know is that significant results can be achieved within 16-25 sessions with an experienced practitioner. (The most difficult cases of ADHD require more time.) The number of sessions and degree of improvement are directly related to how seriously the pupil complies with the requirement to practice the techniques at home for 20 minutes

a day, 5 times a week. These techniques include movements for orientation in space, walking the "8" walk while engaged in various cognitive activities (like counting backwards by 6's) or physical activities (juggling, throwing or catching balls). The practitioner designs the activities to suit the needs, age and interests of the patient and makes sure that they are performed properly. A simple and fun computer program is also used when working with dyslexia, during the sessions and for practice at home.

I hope that by now you have many questions about this method. The first of which is probably, "OK, but how do you know that it works?" Well, I was very skeptical myself. I was not convinced until I began using the method. My first patient was a 35 year old, handsome and intelligent young man who had recently revealed to his family that he couldn't read. He had managed to get through 9 years of school by 'flying below the radar' with good behavior and avoidance techniques. He had never been able to keep a job for more than a few months – until his inability to read interfered with his job performance. He finally decided that if he didn't learn how to read now, he would never have another chance. He found out about the method through a mutual friend, completely by accident. After just 14 meetings, he is reading his first book (a modern Hebrew novel by a well-known author) and I don't know who is more thrilled – he or I.

I am also using this method to help an 8th and a 10th grade young person study English – both with ADD and serious difficulty acquiring vocabulary, learning correct sentence structure, decoding fluently and improving comprehension. They have made significant progress just halfway through their 16 sessions.

If you would like to know more about the method or if you know someone who needs help, I would be happy to answer your questions or refer you to some relevant resources. Your first step should probably be to Google "Raviv method" or better yet their Hebrew website "שיטת רביב" where you can access YouTube interviews with Nili Raviv and her son Barak, as well as a young violinist, famous sports people, an Irish mother and others who have used their methods.

### Bio Data:

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אוניברסיטת בר-אילן  
הפקולטה למדעי הרוח  
המחלקה לתרגום וחקר התרגום



# תואר שני (מ.א.) בתרגום וחקר התרגום

נמשכת ההרשמה למסלולי התרגום

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**עברית <> צרפתית**

**מסלולים נוספים -**

**עברית <> ערבית עברית <> רוסית עברית <> ספרדית -**  
**יפתחו בכפוף למספר המתקבלים.**

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