

ETAI TEACHER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT SIG CONFERENCE**“Bridging Gaps: Teacher Trainers are Teachers in Training”**

The fourth event of the ETAI TT&D SIG (Special Interest Group) was held on Tuesday, February 13, 2018 at the Mofet Institute in Tel Aviv. What was particularly special about this conference was the collaboration between ETAI and the Mofet English Department Heads Forum in convening the conference. The conference provided an opportunity for two organizations devoted to teacher training to join forces, strengthen ties and plan what resulted in a very worthwhile event. About 70 teacher trainers from around the country attended.

The conference opened with greetings from Dr. Michal Golan, the head of the Mofet Institute, who commended the English teaching community in Israel for its untiring passion to continually learn and grow. Dr. Lindsey Shapiro-Steinberg, the SIG Chair, also delivered opening remarks which emphasized the increased contribution of academics and teacher trainers to ETAI over the past few years and expressed hope of its continuance.

Dr. Tziona Levi, the chief inspector, opened the day's events with a fascinating update about the literature program and presented survey results showing that most teachers believe strongly that literature should be part of the curriculum. Simone Duval, the national counselor for literature, shared a new initiative in the teaching of literature which is in its early piloting stages.

The plenary speaker of the conference was literature professor Prof. Susan Handelman from Bar Ilan University. She delivered a lecture and workshop integrated presentation entitled, “40 Years in the Classroom and I'm Still a Teacher in Training.” She began her lecture with an overview of her teaching career informed by a process of lifelong learning and reflection. Her strong belief that learning comes about through embodiment and performance of texts has led to a unique pedagogy whereby the class becomes a community of learners. Drawing on the work of British theater director and vocal coach, Cicely Berry, Prof. Handelman demonstrated how the “muscularity” of language is embraced when actors consciously and physically use their voice in accord with the demands of a text. Prof. Handelman suggested that Berry's work has fascinating implications for students of language.

The plenary was followed by 4 short parallel sessions. In one track, Dr. Bridget Schwartz and Dr. Valerie Yakar presented “Aspects of Reflection on Prospective Practice of TEFL Professional Development,” and Dr. Yulia Muchnik presented “Implementing Brain Research Findings in the EFL Classroom: Is the Bridge Really Too Far Away?” In the second track, Dr. Shulamit Kopeliovich presented “Teaching Linguistics in the English Department of a Teacher Training College: Looking for Effective Pedagogical Tools,” and Dr. Ofra Rosenstein presented “Reliance on Structural L1 Transfer and Top-Down Processing in L2 Reading Comprehension.”

The day closed with a panel entitled “Bridging the Gap between Theory and Practice: Tightening the Ties between the MOE and the Teacher Training Colleges.” The panel participants included Pat Talshir, the English inspector for Jerusalem, Dr. Beverly Topaz, English Department Head at Seminar Hakibbutzim College, and Janet Kupietzky, the English Coordinator and Head of Practicum at Herzog Academic College. Questions centered around how to enhance communication between the MOE and the colleges to create a smoother transition into the field for novice teachers.

ETAI would like to take this opportunity to thank the Mofet Institute for its impeccable hosting and organization. Special thanks go to my co-convenor, Dr. Laura Major, the English Department Heads Forum Chair, who was simply a pleasure to work with and who made sure this conference would be an enriching and inspiring experience. ETAI looks forward to many more annual winter SIG events at Mofet.

Lindsey Shapiro-Steinberg

TT&D SIG Chair, ETAI National Board