

The Beer Sheva Winter Conference

To undergo a career change is never easy , yet Beit Berl's wonderful, comprehensive, one year tutoring course provided me with the opportunity to do just that. While studying at Beit Berl I served as a substitute teacher, and this year I took the plunge and am currently teaching half time in a Yeshiva as well as teaching adults in a Matnas.

As a novice teacher, I derived immense benefit from the recent ETAI Conference held in Be'er Sheva..

I attended several sessions at the conference and would like to share some of my experiences.

Writing in English is considered a very difficult task for English speakers but especially for Israelis. In her Conference presentation, Judith Oster provided us with invaluable steps whereby students are engaged in writing activities in a most creative manner. Judith simply displayed a tootsie roll pop and gave us exercises on the writing process using this old-time favorite. We were asked to describe it, compare it, apply it, argue for and against it and last but not least provide associations. This session was most enlightening .

Another session I attended provided tips on the ABC's of writing. A good start for novice writers would be writing thank you notes, a movie or T.V. review, a concise weather report , a blog (what I did today), all of which comprise concise and to-the-point writing exercises. We were advised to give our students topics with which they are familiar and, more importantly, topics that interest them. Writing about air or water pollution would not be a good idea due to students' limited vocabulary. It is a good idea to teach them writing patterns by letting them practice writing complete answers to questions rather than yes and no answers.

The process might start with writing a topic sentence- I'm on holiday. Lead them through the process by providing guidelines. Each idea will have its own sentence. Sequencing is the next step. Guided writing is the key. Initially, don't expect them to be creative. A good start would be one sentence ideas on what I plan to do while on holiday. For example: "I'm going to do some shopping, I'm going to read books", etc. Lo and behold – the student will be very proud of his/her accomplishment and will express his delight by saying, " I can't believe it, I wrote a paragraph."

To all the wonderful ETAI staff members and organizers I greatly enjoyed the conference. I commend you on the hard work you put into making this conference a huge success. Looking forward to the Spring Conference.

Keep up the great work!!!!

Tzippy Newman

ETAI mini-event in the NORTH

An ETAI mini-event took place on January 14th, at the Center for Hearing Impaired Children, in Tiberias. The event began with Nurit Jafe the manager of the Center giving a brief introduction about how hearing impaired children function in general. She also introduced the audience to the center and the wonderful work they do.

Francine Widerker, the Northern regional counsellor for the hard of hearing, presented practical tips on teaching English to the hard of hearing in the regular English classroom. Terry Benor, a veteran English teacher and diagnostic tester spoke about why she is no longer doing didactic assessments and how to improve the English of students with difficulties. The conference illuminated important issues and provided opportunity for teachers from all areas of the country to exchange views and mingle.

Thanks to Aviva Shapiro, Jennifer Spigelman and Fran Sokel for their behind the scenes help. Many thanks to the 30 teachers who came to listen and learn.