Etai Forum

English Teachers' Association of Israel

iatefl Associate

an affiliate of tesol international association

ETAI Mission Statement

ETAI (English Teachers' Association of Israel) is a grassroots, voluntary organization concerned with the professional development of its close to 1000 members. The membership list includes English teachers from all sectors and at all levels of education – elementary, junior high and secondary school, college and university.

ETAI offers professional support, information, forums for discussion and practical suggestions and resources to help English teachers deepen their expertise and grow in their careers through its local events, regional and national conferences and its journal The ETAI Forum.

The main driving force behind all the organization's activities is to encourage teachers to seek the appropriate avenues to keep up-to-date with the latest research in the field, materials, methodologies, technology, essential for their lives as English language teachers.

It is our job as a teachers' association to supply a variety of arenas to foster professionalism. These include organizing events throughout the country, keeping in touch with the English Inspectorate and the Ministry of Education and maintaining our connections with international English teachers' organizations as an affiliate of TESOL and an associate of IATEFL.

ETAI Membership Dues

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

*must present a valid student ID card

**a special reduction given to retirees who bring in a new member

New member / Membership renewal form can be downloaded from the ETAI site: etni.org.il

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Putting together an issue of the ETAI Forum is a labor of love. Every time an issue is printed, it's like a birth. It goes out to members and we each read and interact with it, gaining knowledge and intellectual stimulation. Everyone who writes for the Forum invests a great deal of time, thought and effort into the articles. And then the articles are edited, laid out and the issue is sent for printing. Publication of the ETAI Forum, like all ETAI events, is a truly collaborative endeavor carried out by a team of dedicated volunteers. Everyone works in ELT yet, in addition, dedicates time and effort to ensure that ETAI thrives as the only internationally affiliated organization for professional subject-area educators in Israel. Consider writing an article, organizing a mini-conference or other event, or implementing any idea you may have that may contribute to ETAI's success. We need you!

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this issue – the authors of the articles, the editors Renee and Geraldine, and Karen in the office.

Michele Ben
ETAI Chair

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of the ETAI Forum contains what we hope has a wide variety of articles that will appeal to the wide range of interests of our readers. It contains material that relates to elementary through secondary level grades, theoretical and practical aspects of teaching, sharing of experiences and materials and even 'soul food' for teachers.

You will meet some of our best-known and faithful contributors such as Raphael Gefen, David Young, Miri Yohana and Rachel Segev-Miller as well as some fresh 'faces' – people whom you may actually teach with such as Naomi Geffen and Eduardo Lina. We even have an article from Adrianna Millikovsky, who teaches abroad. We urge all of you to follow their examples and send in your articles to let us know about something you have tried, a special experience that you'd like to share, or materials you have prepared. Your articles can be short or long. We are happy to help with editing, so you need not worry if your English is not perfect.

On another subject, I would like to invite all of you to refresh yourselves professionally with a day off to attend the ETAI Spring Conference. This just the boost we all need as we begin to feel the last stretch of this year's work and the much needed Passover break. I was gratified to see many new and younger faces at the Mini Conference in Gan Raveh. I'm sure that our new teachers who have attended any of the conferences have enjoyed them so much that they will continue to attend future conferences. The trick is to get teachers to attend their first conference, so I urge each of us who have new teachers on their staff, or who know any teachers who have not attended an ETAI conference, to do everything we can to encourage these teachers to join us at the Spring Conference.

Wishing you all a bright and energetic Spring,

Renee Wahl
Editor, ETAI Forum

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear friends and former colleagues,

In the article **"From Pedagogy to Lexicography and Back" by Geoff Toister (ETAI Forum XXIV, 3, 2013)**, I was very gratified to find that "Lexical Syllabus", part of the English Curriculum 1988 of the Ministry of Education, was listed in the bibliography, and thereby saved from total oblivion. After my retirement in 1992 as Chief Inspector for English, there were a number of rather ignorant and false press reports claiming that this Syllabus or Curriculum focused overwhelmingly on grammatical structures to the detriment of vocabulary acquisition.

This Syllabus/Curriculum was based on the concept of **communicative competence and performance**, subdivided **into linguistic competence, pragmatic competence and sociolinguistic competence**. What was lacking in the vocabulary section of "linguistic competence" was, of course, terminology relating to the digital age. The lexemes listed for the Primary School and Intermediate Division ("Junior High") were the basis for the Kernerman dictionary "Passport" (English-Hebrew, with sample sentences and a Hebrew-English lexicon at the end of the book), written by the late Yaakov Levi and myself.

Geoff Toister was employed as a lexicographer (together with Yaakov Levi and myself) for the "Kernerman Advanced English Dictionary", which I also edited. A monolingual edition (i.e. no translation) is available as an app on most smartphones; semibilingual editions are available with Russian, Lithuanian, Portuguese and Estonian translations (so far). Hebrew and Arabic semi-bilingual editions are not yet available on the market.

Raphael Gefen

Save the date for the summer conference!

Make your plans now!

July 8-9th, 2014

Jerusalem

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.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF … AMANDA CAPLAN

by Amanda Caplan

Teaching English to 12- to 15-year-olds in a state junior high in Rehovot, Israel, is challenging when their first language doesn't even use the same alphabet. But making paper planes helps.

My school day starts the night before when I pack my bag. Apart from the usual lesson plan, textbooks and board markers, do I need dice, counters, a ball, some other props? Yes, props – teachers are also actors.

The alarm rings and, as I wake up, I run through my lesson plans for the day. Eight o'clock comes and I'm in the classroom with 35 students, the usual five still on the way, and only 32 chairs. Some find chairs, others settle on the floor.

Out come the students' notebooks, I give today's topic and they start writing; fluency, not accuracy, is the name of the game. The students scribble away, trying to express their creativity in English, a second or even third language for them. Not an easy task as none of them uses the Latin alphabet in their first languages of Hebrew, Russian or Amharic.

I know without looking who has forgotten their notebooks and who can't think of anything to write. Within minutes, everyone is busy – most, but not all, of them on task. What's that in the back corner? The ubiquitous mobile phone! I approach the guilty party: "Your bag or mine until the lesson ends?" There's a "discussion" that ends with: "Come and see me during break."

I implement my lesson plan – writing, role play, a grammar-based board game. It's a double lesson but these students don't disappear in the five-minute break between as they are working on their role plays. There are no computers in the classroom but never mind: homework is to watch a YouTube clip and to respond using Web 2.0 tools. Most students have computers at home; some will even do their homework.

In the 10 minutes between lessons, I brace myself for my challenging class. This is my "small" group, only 20 students. None of them really reads English despite four years of lessons. It's my job to show them they can succeed. I fix a smile on my face and walk in. No one takes any notice. I take a piece of paper, write my name on it, draw stick figures and write "my children". I make a paper plane and propel it across the room. Suddenly, the students realise that I'm there and, when I promise that they, too, will make planes, everyone eventually sits down.

I hand out paper and pencils. There are no expectations here of students bringing their own. I ask them to write their names and the name of something important to them, and tell them that they can draw a picture. The girls help the boys to make paper planes; gender stereotypes are strong here. Soon we have 15 planes flying around the room. Students pick one up and read it aloud. I'm pleased: 75 per cent participation, they're reading and writing in English, and there are even a few smiles. The bell goes. Today's lesson was a good one.

Time for the "long" break. Fifteen minutes, coffee or sandwich, no time for both. And I have to speak to my phone addict from earlier. It's a relief not to have playground duty.

Two more lessons, then I invigilate a history exam. English is considered an important subject, but it always seems to be the English classes that are cancelled.

Now it's my turn to give an exam. Reading comprehension, spelling, grammar and writing. There will be plenty of marking when I get home and more lessons to plan.

No meetings today, so I can go home. I always smile when I leave school. Either it was a good day, so I'm happy that I'm a teacher, or it was a bad day, so I'm happy to get out of there. Today was the former: I'm happy.

Enter the Digital Age

ECB Eric Cohen Books

THE DISAPPEARING 'S' AND THE HARD OF HEARING

Francine Widerker *(widerker@gmail.com)*

Hard of hearing children are unique in their language learning abilities. Depending on the kind of hearing loss the child has, the age at which the child became hearing impaired and the age at which they were diagnosed and treated are all factors that contribute to the individual's language acquisition abilities. Every hearing impaired child hears differently.

The concept of hearing according to decibels is familiar to most of us. The louder the sound, the easier it is for a person to hear. We all inherently understand that ambulances have loud sirens so that we all hear them and move out of the way to allow them to pass. We also understand that some people have very acute hearing and hear a dripping faucet, while others don't. Normal hearing in a child is between 0-20 dB. Profoundly deaf children don't hear from 90 dB on up. There are obviously many children with hearing losses in the middle, ranging from mild to severe hearing loss. Those children are often integrated into our regular English classes.

Hearing is also measured according to frequency. This measurement is less known to the public and more difficult to treat. Most hearing aids increase decibel levels, but they don't have the ability to improve frequency. Different phonetic sounds are heard at different frequencies. An example of a low frequency sound is "m". An example of a high frequency sound is "s". A child with low frequency hearing loss won't hear the "m" sound when people are speaking. A child with high frequency hearing loss won't hear the "s" when people are speaking. Hearing aids do not correct this.

Children who are hard of hearing therefore only hear partial words. The following is a graph that is commonly known as the "Speech Banana". It charts the sounds that a hearing impaired person doesn't hear according to degree of hearing loss. The 20-40 dB range delineates the sounds that a mildly hearing impaired person doesn't hear. Notice that the ever so important "s" is one of the first sounds to disappear. Many of our students with even mild hearing loss don't hear the sound "s".

If you have a student with a mild hearing impairment in your class, there is a very high probability that the child doesn't hear the "s" sound. The implications of learning English without the sound "s" are far reaching and can be overwhelming. However, the simple fact that you are aware of the child's difficulty enables you to assist them. Simply using a lot of visual aids when teaching subjects such as plural/ singular nouns and third person present simple, can make a world of difference to a hard of hearing child.

This information is obviously only the very beginning. It is essential that you be in touch first and foremost with the child's parents. The homeroom teacher, school advisor and local Shema treatment center are also essential resources. Please don't try to do this on your own. Find out as much information as you can about the hard of hearing student in your class.
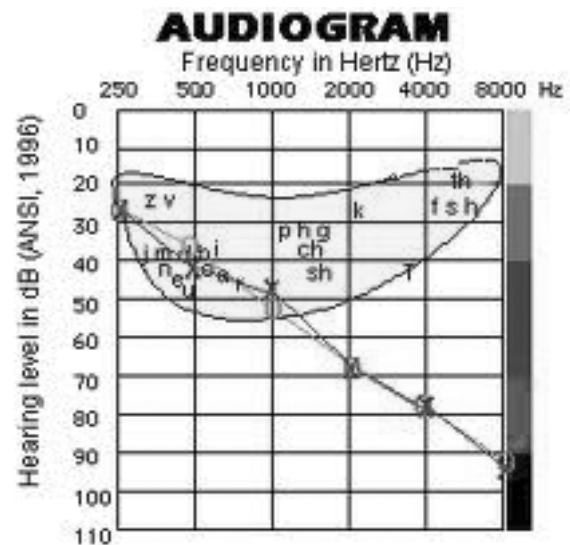
*Butler Iain, MB ChB, MMed (ORL) Identification and Management of Childhood Hearing Loss,CME, Vol 30, No 9 (2012)

Francine Widerker is an ESL counselor for the hard of hearing, Shema Treatment Center, Northern Region

LISTENING AND SPEAKING CAN BE FUN

Karen White *(karen.white@aon.at)*

I would like to begin this article by thanking all those at ETAI for such a great summer conference. A big thank you too, to all those who came to my workshop and so gallantly took part in all the activities mentioned below.

They are activities which require very little equipment, can be done with small or large classes and can be adapted to different levels.

Stand up, please.

Divide the class into 4-6 groups. Give each group a word. Read a short story. When the students hear their word, they have to stand up and then sit down again.

What comes next?

Read a story and stop every now and again. The students tell their partner what word they think comes next. Then you continue the story.

Example: Last year I went to Italy for three .... (here you stop and the students have to guess what comes next.

Students may guess days, weeks, months). You continue with the story: weeks. I stayed in a ....

Alphabet story

Divide the class into groups of 4-6 students. Give them a sentence beginning with "A" e.g. Auntie Sue came to visit me last week. The first student in the group has to continue the story by adding a sentence beginning with the letter "B". e.g. Believe it or not, she was wearing a pink hat. The second student continues with a sentence beginning with "C" and so on through the alphabet.

The story could also be written.

Another story activity

Divide the class into groups of 4-6 students. Give them a list of words from a topic or a unit in the course book which you have just completed. Student one begins by making a sentence using one word from the list. This word is then crossed off.

The second student continues and uses another word from the list. It doesn't matter in which order the students use the words on the list. However, once crossed off, the word can't be used again.

Variations: The class could suggest the words. Pictures could be used instead of words or the students could be asked to draw an object on a piece of paper which could be used. Once again, these stories could be written down. If students are allowed to have cell phones in the class, they could record it on their phones and then write it down.

Interruptions

Ask a student to tell you about something e.g. What did you do on the weekend?

The student may begin like this: On the weekend I cleaned my room.

You interrupt and ask another student to tell you about their room.

They may continue something like this: I've got a bed in my room and a blue carpet. You interrupt and ask another student to tell you some things that are blue.

What an adventure!

Divide the class into groups of 4-6 students. Give each student a slip of paper with an unlikely situation written on it e.g. Yesterday I swam with some sharks.

The first student reads out their situation. The other students have to ask questions e.g. Where did you swim? Were you alone? What did the sharks look like?

The first student answers the questions as if they really did this activity.

Fortunately / Unfortunately

Divide the class into groups of 4-6 students. Give the students a sentence beginning with "unfortunately". For example, "Unfortunately it was raining when I went out yesterday".The first student in the group has to continue the story by adding a sentence beginning with "fortunately". The second student continues with a sentence beginning with "unfortunately" and so on.

The story could also be written.

Activity with a difference

This is based on the game "Activity" but with a difference.

Depending on how long you want to play, write 20-50 words, which have recently been learnt, on pieces of paper. Fold them twice and place in a container. Have smaller coloured containers for each team. Each team has a different colour.

Split the class into 2-4 teams.

Round 1: The first member of team 1 comes up, takes out a piece of paper and tries to explain the word. The rest of the team has to guess the word. As soon as they

have guessed it, the player puts the slip of paper into the team's container and takes the next piece of paper. The player continues until one minute is up. Then it is the turn of the second team for one minute. Continue until all the words have been guessed.

If all the slips of paper have been used before the minute is up, the team playing starts the next round and makes up their minute. Count the number of slips of paper in each team's container. This is the number of points they get for Round 1.

The pieces of paper are folded up again and placed in the large container.

Round 2: This time the players have to either mime the word or draw it.

Round 3: This is the funniest round. The player has to "describe" the word using only sounds. The rest of the team must close their eyes because it is almost impossible to make sounds without miming.

This may sound very difficult but the class already know the words.

This is a fun way to revise vocabulary.

I hope you all have a lot of fun trying out these ideas.

Karen White is a freelance teacher in Austria working with all age groups from 3 - 86 and teaching all types of English. She is also a trainer for students with dyslexia.

ENHANCING SPEAKING SKILLS THROUGH COMMUNICATING WITH NATIVE SPEAKERS

Mai Abdo *(abdomai984@gmail.com)*

Normally teaching any language involves the teaching of the following four skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. The speaking skill should be considered of special importance as it is not so easy to teach that skill. Teaching it in a foreign language requires practice. Naturally practice is more efficient if conducted with native speakers and if it is hard to do so there are plenty of ways in which that practice can be effected. In this article I will talk about my personal experience in teaching that specific skill. Let me start with several methods we can use in teaching that skill, after which I will expound on the very special experience my students encountered with native speakers.

1. **Create the speaking rule** which forces students to use the English language whenever they want to say or ask for something. The sentences might not be complete or grammatically correct but at least students here try to remember every English word they learned.

2. **Drama acts:** students can pick any text and turn it into a drama act; they can even make it into a song with the music they want. The students usually tap their fingers, clap or hit the desk for music.

3. **Simple conversations:** here the students simply love to use their imagination. They can take the role of a famous singer or actor and talk about them as if they were that person. The conversation has to be in English and it starts when a ball is thrown to the students. Whoever catches the ball answers the phone; and the conversation can start like this: Hello is this … ? (students choose any singer or actor to impersonate).

4. **Picture discussion:** for this activity any picture can be brought into class and a discussion is conducted. We can also divide the students into groups with a photo for each group and then move around the students making sure they are conducting their discussion in English. Usually students find it really amusing and fun to discuss their own photos. As such, a teacher can take photos for them during field trips and different activities for later discussions.

5. **General comprehension questions:** these questions can be asked on a daily basis. We can use five minutes or less from every lesson to ask the questions. The teacher can choose a different student each time and ask questions that cover different topics such as: hobbies, siblings and travel.

6. **Speaking games** and there are many such as: getting the full story where one student says I have been reading a very interesting story but gives no details except in response to questions. For example; Who are the characters? What are their names? Where do they live?

7. **Likes and dislikes:** this is a very interesting game where students state their likes and dislikes and they can add the likes and dislikes of their peers or parents.

The previous activities are parts of different activities used in teaching the speaking skill; however they have sometimes proved to be insufficient as students encountered difficulty when they were placed in real life situations.

In March 2013, students were invited by the America House to attend a special event on women as March is the month when Mother's Day and Women's Day are celebrated. The students were received by the director of the America House who had prepared a beautiful presentation about famous women who have had a positive influence on the world. Before the presentation the students were introduced to a special guest who said a few nice words and the students were asked to applaud him. At that moment all of the students stared as if to say, "Why? Does he need help?" That was a very important moment for me as a teacher because I realized the importance of teaching students idioms that can be used daily.

This activity at the America House was followed by many other activities where students met native English speakers and were able to communicate with them. But the visit itself encouraged me to add more speaking skill activities such as those that are summarized below.

1. **The use of different clips and songs:** students can be taught the speaking skill through modern songs. They can even pick their own song and the teacher can make a special karaoke event for them with their favorite songs. Through these songs the students actually expand their vocabulary, which will assist them in speaking more fluently.

2. **Real life situations:** a teacher can create an atmosphere of different real life situations for the students in which they can only use the English language. For instance a teacher can create a day for healthy food. During the activity the students pretend they are trying to sell healthy snacks. In order to promote a sale, they need to describe the ingredients of the snacks and explain their nutritional benefits.

3. **Keep encouraging:** keep encouraging the students to listen carefully to English songs and shows and to speak as much English as they want.

After the real life experience and the new activities used with the students, the celebrity chef Art Smith visited the school. The students welcomed the chef, spoke with him, asked him questions and enjoyed a lecture from him. They were able to understand the chef and his accent and even conduct a discussion with him.

Celebrity chef Art Smith in his presentation dealing with his work

To conclude, here is a short summary of the most important points presented in this article:

1. As teachers we have to make sure that students are aware of the fact that improving their speaking skills will help them communicate more easily and effectively

2. Teachers should encourage students to practice :

<div align="center">

Where they can

When they can

</div>

Any practice is good – whether with a native English speaker or not.

3. Teachers must try, as much as possible, to put their students into authentic situations. Give them the chance to try to respond to what people might say to them. Moreover teachers must encourage students not to translate from their native tongue since this may take too much time. The resulting hesitations interfere with fluency and are uncomfortable.

4. Teachers must make sure they enhance their students' level of confidence as this is an essential asset in gaining the speaking skill. Teachers must remember that it is very important to help students build up their self-confidence.

    In conclusion speaking is closely related to listening and must be done in a relaxed atmosphere. Therefore, teachers should do their best to create a light and accepting atmosphere when teaching speaking skills. When students are relaxed they are less hesitant and more confident.

Biodata:

Mai Abdo is an English teacher at Salaa Girls School, East Jerusalem. She holds a Masters Degree in English Methodology and is currently working on her second master's degree in translation.

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ESP: ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES
Presented at the ETAI Conference, Summer, 2013
Shelly Ganiel (ganielshelly@gmail.com)

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ESP:

English for Specific Purposes is centered on language that is appropriate to activities which are connected to the particular discipline being studied. This language includes terms of grammar, lexis (vocabulary), register as well as language-related study skills, conversation skills and genre.

ESP is generally for adult learners, but can be used for teaching high school students as well. This is especially true in vocational courses. In my case, the high school vocational studies are in a culinary study track.

ESP courses can be at all levels, including beginners.

What makes ESP different from a "regular" ESL program?

- **Program:** The main purpose for learning English is built on an assessment of purposes, needs and functions that the learner must perform. The aim of the instruction is what determines which skills are most needed and the syllabus is made up according to these needs.

- ESP combines subject matter and English language teaching. It is highly motivating for the students because they are able to apply what they learn to their studies, jobs, etc.

- Their ability in their subject-matter field transfers, in turn, to their ability to acquire English. Hopefully, the teacher can use the students' subject-matter knowledge to help them acquire English more rapidly.

- Usually, the <u>main focus</u> is on lexis or vocabulary. To use Leo Selivan's terms: the lexis here is a co-text. This is the linguistic environment of the word as opposed to context which is the non-verbal environment in which a word is used. (Leo Selivan has an article on this in his most interesting blog.)

Here, in ESP, the co-text is what is important for the learning context.

There is a definite and specific responsibility on the teacher in an ESP classroom. The teacher must organize the courses, set learning objectives, establish a positive learning environment and evaluate a student's progress. Several textbooks are available for specific courses such as Business Management, Hotel Management, Computer Studies, etc. After having seen some of these texts and even trying to use a few, I have realized that the teachers really have to prepare a lot of the material themselves. This is especially true because the texts are either British or American and do not relate to the Israeli scene. Certain materials can be used and ideas can be adapted, but the main subject material must come from the ESP teacher of that particular course. Preparing one's own material is also necessary when teaching in a specific company which wants its workers to improve their English in the company's field of endeavor.

In general, it is important to remember that adults often work harder than school children to learn a new language. They may/should have learning skills to help them learn more efficiently. They often lack the self-confidence to speak a simple form of the language, especially if they are proficient in their mother tongue (and maybe other languages as well). By working with vocabulary they can become more fluent and more confident in their knowledge.

In the workshop session I gave out many samples of vocabulary work sheets and ESP material that I have prepared these past few years. Below are some examples. I hope that they encouraged the participants in the workshop to prepare their own material and work in the extremely interesting field of ESP.

WORKSHEET 1

OUR MEALS

A. Learn the new words for the story below. Translate them.

<div dir="rtl">נא ללמוד את המילים החדשות לקטע ולתרגם אותן.</div>

New Words:

meals	dinner
breakfast	supper
lunch	morning
dessert	afternoon
evening	night
main meal	

B. Read this story and answer the questions after it.

<div dir="rtl">נא לקרוא את הקטע ולענות על השאלות הבאות אחריו.</div>

We eat three or four meals a day.

In the morning, we have breakfast. What time is breakfast? It is 7 or 8 o'clock. We eat bread, salad, eggs and coffee. Sometimes we have cornflakes with milk.

In the afternoon we eat lunch OR dinner. Dinner is the word for the main meal of the day. What time is lunch? It is 1 pm. We eat meat or chicken with potatoes or rice. We also have cooked vegetables or salad. We drink juice, cola or water. We have fruit for dessert.

In the evening we have dinner OR supper. If we had a big lunch (dinner) then now we eat supper. If lunch was a sandwich and a drink, then now we have dinner. What time is supper? It is 7 pm. We eat fish or meat or eggs with salad. Our dessert is cake and coffee or tea.

Sometimes, we have a snack at night. It is tea or coffee with something sweet. Sometimes we eat just fruit.

It is important to eat 3 or 4 meals every day.

Questions:

1. What meal do we have in the morning?   ....
2. When do we have breakfast?   ....
3. What is one thing we have for breakfast?   ....
4. When do we have lunch?   ....
5. What is the name for the main meal?   ....
6. What do we drink for lunch?   ....
7. What meal do we have in the evening?   ....
8. What is one thing we have for supper?   ....
9. What do we eat for dessert?   ....
10. What is it important to eat?   ....

WORKSHEET 2

ISRAELI BREAKFAST MENU

Read the story. Then translate the new vocabulary words that follow.

קרא את הקטע הבא. תרגם את המילים החדשות.

Israel is a hot country. The pioneer farmers would begin work early in the morning with just a cup of coffee. When it became very hot, they would stop work. Then they would eat a very big, healthy breakfast. Usually they had bread, olives, cheese and vegetables.

Today we eat smaller breakfasts. But Israeli hotels still serve a very big breakfast to their guests. In fact, one good thing guests remember about hotels in Israel is their great breakfast.

Here are some of the foods served for breakfast.

1. Assorted breads and rolls	
2. Assorted cakes	
3. Assorted croissants	
4. Baba ghanoush (eggplant salad)	
5. Borekas	
6. Creamed potatoes	
7. Cheeses: white, with herbs, with spices	
8. Cheese cake	
9. Cheese platters	
10. Coffee: instant, black, Turkish	
11. Dry cereals	

12. Eggs:
  a. sunny-side up
  b. eggs over
  c. scrambled
  d. hard-boiled
  e. soft-boiled
  f. fried
  g. shakshouka
  h. with herbs / onions / mushrooms / cheese	

13. Fish
  a. herring
  b. smoked
	.

14. Hot cereals	
15. Hot chocolate	
16. Hummous	

17. Juices:
  a. grapefruit
  b. orange	

18. Labaneh	
19. Milk	
20. Pancakes	
21. Tea	
22. Tehina	
23. Vegetable platters	

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DRAWING STRATEGIES TO EXPRESS EMOTIONS IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

Yasmin Gidoni *(yasminos1@walla.co.il)*

Introduction

Political violence (wars and violent political conflict) has been raging in Israel for many years. As a result, the exposure of Israeli citizens to political violence contributes to the severity of the psychological symptomatology (Al-Krenawi, Lev-Wiesel & Sehwail, 2007) and is correlated with consequences to mental and physical health (Clark, Everson-Rose, Suglia, Btoush, Alonso & Haj-Yahia, 2010). Children, in particular, suffer from negative outcomes when being exposed to political violence, such as heightened aggression and violence, anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress, somatic complaints, poor school performance and engagement in political violence (Cummings, Merrilees, Schermerhorn, Goeke-Morey, Shirlow & Cairns, 2011).

Therefore, it is essential to allow pupils to express their feelings. By expressing feelings, one gains control over them (Horn, 2001) and reduces the possibility of entertaining suicidal thoughts in the future (Weber, 2012). Due to frequent exposure of Israeli pupils to political violence, I find it important to offer my pupils the opportunity to vent their feelings so that they will be emotionally available for learning. As an EFL teacher in Israel, I believe that it is important to integrate activities that promote emotional health into the regular curriculum of English language learning.

Choosing to focus on drawing in my research stems from my personal interest. I have always loved to draw and I am also very good at it, which is why it came so naturally to me to combine drawing activities in my lessons. In addition, I chose this method to be used in the EFL classroom to be a factor in reducing foreign language learning anxiety that is common among EFL pupils. In summary, as a teacher, it is important to help pupils become better learners by reducing their level of anxiety and maximizing their potential for learning.

Background

A drawing is an expressive symbol that can convey specific moods, expressions, emotions and feelings. Through the medium of art, individuals can communicate, express themselves and reflect their own vision of the world in ways that are accessible to others (Gardner, 1982; Mahmood & Iqbal, 2010; Vuko, 1998). Teachers who incorporate drawing activities in their lessons can come to learn more about the personal lives of their pupils. In addition, children's art illustrates a relationship between themselves and someone or something else and, as a result, may increase a sense of personal power (Vuko, 1998).

Moreover, art is therapeutic. It helps children cope with emotional, psychological or stress-related conflicts and helps soothe emotions when produced individually (Vuko, 1998). Research has shown that drawing activities yield beneficial results for children who have undergone traumatic experiences (Hart, 2005; Jones, 1995; Wittmann, 2010).

Art also relaxes people and, therefore, using art therapy is excellent for dealing with stress management. It has also been shown that art therapy can be both an approach to those who do not respond to normal therapy and an alternative option for people who need to work through their difficulties in additional ways. Expressing their problems on paper can, therefore, be a way to achieve this goal (Jones, 1995; Roby, 2005; Rushowy, 1992).

Framework

As a student teacher, I taught a 45-minute lesson once a week in an elementary school in Israel. This research was conducted in a 5th grade class that was heterogeneous in terms of gender (15 girls and 24 boys) and achievements with weak, average and high-level pupils who were all English L2 learners. They came from medium to high socio-economic backgrounds.

Poems, songs, stories, and informative texts were the focus of the EFL lessons that included one drawing strategy each time. I connected the learning material to the school requirements and to the curriculum. Most of the texts were taken from the textbook, while others were chosen in accordance with my and my pupils' personal interests. Research tools were used to determine whether drawing strategies could provide pupils with an opportunity for emotional expression in the EFL classroom.

In each lesson I read a text, and asked the class to draw the message or the main idea in relation to their own lives. Pupils were encouraged to express the emotional impact of the text as it related to an event that they experienced. In the next stage, they were asked to look at their drawings and describe them, as well as to explain the connection between their drawing and the text. Finally, they completed written feedback forms to assess whether drawing was an effective tool to express and calm emotions. They were also encouraged to add

other outcomes resulting from the implementation of this method.

My initial goal did not include the use of drawing to promote emotional health. However, after observing pupils' positive responses to drawing in the classroom and after reading their initial responses to the questionnaires, I decided to add additional texts to encourage the expression of feelings.

The workshop

In the workshop, participants listened to the song "Blackbird" by the Beatles and discussed the content of the song, focusing on the struggle of the blackbird and how it overcame its problem. Then, as a post-listening activity, participants were instructed to draw an event from their lives in which they felt like the blackbird, reflecting a difficult experience which they had succeeded in overcoming. Finally, participants presented their drawings, explaining their struggle and how they overcame their difficulties.

Blackbird / Beatles

1

Blackbird singing in the dead of night
Take these broken wings and learn to fly
All your life
You were only waiting for this moment to arise

2

Blackbird singing in the dead of night
Take these sunken eyes and learn to see
All your life
You were only waiting for this moment to be free

Blackbird fly, blackbird fly
Into the light of the dark black night
Blackbird fly, blackbird fly
Into the light of the dark black night

3

Blackbird singing in the dead of night
Take these broken wings and learn to fly
All your life
You were only waiting for this moment to arise
You were only waiting for this moment to arise
You were only waiting for this moment to arise

This created a valuable conversation as participants contributed their different points of view. It was important to me not to dismiss anyone's opinion, but to welcome it, while conveying the message that multiple interpretations make art meaningful. Nevertheless, participants had to relate to the optimistic message of the song and complete the drawing assignment according to the instructions.

Reflections

I was very excited to conduct my first workshop and I have gained several insights. First, I have learned the importance of letting other people express their opinions. Participants' reactions towards the song were unexpected. Some of them regarded the message as optimistic, whereas others regarded it as negative and inappropriate for teaching young learners. However, it was important for me to welcome everyone's opinion and to create an environment in which all of the participants could feel free to express their thoughts without being criticized. This conveys the message that multiple interpretations make art meaningful - there is no such thing as a right or wrong interpretation of art. From this experience, I learned that all of the participants' voices should be heard and respected, even if I do not agree with some of them. Different opinions actually make the workshop more interesting.

Second, it is essential to make sure that the participants understand the assignment. One participant did not understand the assignment and instead of relating the song to a real event in her life, drew the blackbird and its struggle. This made me realize that it is not enough to give time for questions, but that it is also necessary to walk around the room to make sure that everyone understands what to do, just as I do in my lessons in the classroom.

Since all the participants in the workshop were adults, I took into account that some of them would not feel comfortable with the drawing activity. Indeed, as opposed to adults, children like to draw because drawing represents their natural mode of communication as a common activity carried out outside of school (Rawat, Qazi & Hamid, 2012). For this reason, I prepared an alternative assignment in which I planned to ask the participants to draw graphic symbols. For example, a house could be represented by a square, a person by a circle, etc. In this way, participants could engage in the assignment without embarrassment. Then, in the presentation, they could explain their drawings while relating to each of the symbols. From this experience, my suggestion to presenters is to anticipate the participants' responses and always come prepared with an alternative activity. By coming prepared, the presenter creates a non-threatening environment, in which all participants can take part in the workshop and express themselves comfortably during the process.

Suggestions to teachers for using drawing strategies in the EFL classroom

All EFL teachers wish their pupils to succeed in English, but not all teachers are able to recognize pupils who may have high levels of English language anxiety.

For this reason, it is recommended that teachers let their pupils draw. By doing so, they create a low-stress classroom atmosphere which enables all pupils to reduce their level of anxiety, and as a result, to improve their achievements. However, maintaining a low-stress classroom environment can only be achieved if teachers ensure that neither they nor their pupils make negative comments about pupils' drawings.

Teachers must explain the purpose of drawing in the EFL classroom as a learning strategy that connects the material learned with the pupils' life experiences. The objective of including drawing assignments in English lessons is to have students reach the goal of learning, rather than focusing on the aesthetic appearance of their drawings. It is natural for children, especially in elementary school, to invest a lot of time making their drawings beautiful and colorful. However, once the teacher points out that the drawing should reflect their personal thoughts and feelings rather than represent a decorative drawing, pupils will come to understand the purpose of drawing in the EFL classroom.

Drawing, as a universal language, can be easily implemented by EFL teachers with a minimum amount of preparation and costly materials. I believe that teachers who are apprehensive of implementing drawing strategies due to their own insecurities regarding this skill, will quickly discover that pupils react with enthusiasm and motivation.

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HOW I USE MOODLE AT KUGEL
A follow up to the ETAI 2013 Summer Conference session
By Eduardo Lina *(eduardolina1@gmail.com)*

This last July I had the privilege of giving a session on Moodle at the ETAI 2013 Summer Conference in Jerusalem. That session ('*How I use Moodle at Kugel*") was my first ever as a speaker at any ETAI Conference. There is a PREZI that can sum it up. Just write *"Prezi of the Moodle session at the Summer ETAI 2013 Conference"* on Google, and you will have access to it. Thanks for the opportunity to share. I enjoyed the experience very much.

During this 2013 - 2014 school year, I keep using Moodle (abbreviation for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment) as a complement to classroom work: I introduce texts in different formats (written text, video, audio, images); I put links to different websites (to mention but one example, The British Council Teen Magazine); I create and upload to Moodle "Hot questions", surveys and questionnaires (created on Moodle or on Google Drive); I encourage pupils to share in forums so that even those who do not speak in class can have their voices heard; I give homework, assignments and quizzes, and make it a point to relate to them in class; I use the form of blended learning known as "The Flipped Classroom" in which pupils learn new content online by watching videos, reading online material, listening to something, etc. so that I can interact with them, both on Moodle and in class, relating to what they have learned on their own; I ask pupils to upload digital material of their own … . In short, Moodle allows me to have *one place* where I can have pupils access content online without sending them to lots of different sites, and getting them lost on the way.

Just like last year, I use Moodle at Kugel for all the courses I teach this school year. Kugel High School works with Mashov, the company that provides Moodle as part of the package deal they offer schools. I have just started facilitating / tutoring an online course for Kugel's teachers in Hebrew on Kugel's Moodle. My idea is to teach them how to work with Moodle. I do so because I think that teaching and studying with Moodle is by no means "my personal little project" at school. I believe that working with Moodle is part and parcel of Kugel's educational work nowadays. Time will tell whether I succeed or not.

I use Moodle in my Spanish as Foreign Language and English as Foreign Language courses. As far as English is concerned, I use Moodle with students of all levels, since I teach one 10th grade Special Education class, one 10th grade 3 - 4 points Bagrut class and one 11th grade 5 points Bagrut class. Moodle allows me to present materials and get pupils to work in different levels, which means that I can personalize instruction. Pupils are expected to study with Moodle either at home or in the school library or Municipal Public Library, where computers with Internet connection are available.

Are all my pupils happy with the idea that they must do extra work that is available 24 / 7? I guess most are not, of course, or at least that is what some say. Their *happiness* when it comes to Moodle is not something that bothers me, though. I do not ask them whether they want to study with Moodle or not. Instead, I simply tell them they must do so because I believe this is important when it comes to teaching 21st century skills. I hope they eventually appreciate it.

I wish to emphasize that Mashov's work in anything that has to do with Moodle at Kugel is superb. Mashov makes the latest version of Moodle available, and helps me solve any technical problems that may show up. I am more than happy with their work.

Using Moodle, the free and open-source e-learning software platform, in our work as teachers of English as a Foreign Language in Israel is very important . For me, Moodle is not just *another* learning environment, but the best choice when using New Technologies with my pupils. I have used others that are very good, too.

Using Moodle at school with elementary to high school pupils, we can teach the critical skills pupils need to be successful in the digital age. Teachers can encourage learning to collaborate with others, and connecting through technology. Some of Moodle's features facilitate working together to solve a common challenge) which involves the contribution and exchange of ideas and knowledge or resources to achieve a goal. To be sure, doing that in English helps us teach the language.

Equally important, by using Moodle with our pupils we teach Information and Communications Technology (ICT) literacy – learning in digital networks. Learning through digital means can enable our pupils to function in social networks[1].

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[1]See "What are 21st century skill?" at http://atc21s.org/index.php/about/what-are-21st-century-skills/

No less important is the fact that Moodle is used at lots of universities and colleges everywhere, including many in Israel, by using Moodle at school we can help prepare our pupils for their future academic life.

You must have heard of Moodle, and may want to get detailed and specific information as to what you can do with it (and what it can do for you). Just google "*In the Mood for Moodle*", and you will get Jeff Standfords' article containing exactly what you may want.[2] You can also get an insight into Moodle by checking the Moodle website at https://moodle.org/. Finally, just writing "Moodle" on Youtube will take you to lots of videos which include tutorials, examples of activities, and more.

One inconvenience with Moodle is that student privacy concerns will not make it simple for you to access the Moodle site of any given school so that you can check what teachers and pupils do there. It is true that some Moodle sites may grant you visitor's access, but then you may just be able to see some features, and probably do nothing. A Moodle site is not a standard open-to-all website. You need to be able to login in order to really appreciate Moodle.

The best way to learn what you can do with Moodle is to take a course and at the same time practice what you learn. You can learn Moodle on your own, but since collaboration plays such an important in Moodle, you may miss much this way. I wish the Ministry of Education saw the importance of providing Moodle courses to teachers, especially teachers of English.

In the absence of such a venue, there are a number of ways available to learn Moodle. I enrolled in two of the excellent free courses offered by Nellie Deutch and colleagues at Integrating Technology for Active Lifelong Learning (IT4ALL)[3]. One of them was a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) in which people from many countries took part, worked together, taught each other, prepared tutorials, etc. That was something! It seems to me that a fully online course combining real time (synchronic) meetings and a-synchronic work helps greatly to master Moodle. Incidentally, the material is available. Check the IT4ALL site, and have a look at two Facebook groups: Moodle for Teachers and Moodle Mania.

Another way to learn Moodle is by accessing a course where student privacy issues are not a problem. Moodle org. provides you with such an opportunity: *Mount Orange School* is a real Moodle site with real courses

for students aged 8 to 18 with real student data and real (fake) students and teachers. You can access many Moodle courses at the site, as the school is open to anyone[4].

I am sure there are more possibilities to learn Moodle on the web, but, again, I see a role for Israel's Ministry of Education here, helping teachers in Israel learn Moodle by providing courses that cater to their needs. This is not a dream at all: at http://vcampus.cet.ac.il/ in the framework of Matach, I facilitate/tutor a course for Spanish as Foreign Language teachers who work in the Israeli school system. I teach Moodle, and we collaborate creating online material related to different aspects of teaching and learning the language. I used to tutor / facilitate courses using High Learn, but the Spanish as a Foreign Language Department at the Ministry has decided to help its teachers use Moodle since it is available in many schools.

Who knows? Perhaps the Ministry of Education is working on giving Israel's schools access to Moodle even as I am writing these lines.

To conclude, let me just add that I do not always succeed when using Moodle (and not just then), but then, you don't have to be afraid to fail when you try something new that you believe is good for you and your pupils. "Failure is an essential part of success", they say, so don't be afraid to try and fail. If at school you have access to Moodle through Mashov or any similar program, try it. Don't be afraid to innovate because here is where we teachers meet the Start Up culture in the Start Up Nation. We do not lack the entrepreneur's spirit, do we?

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[2]The link is http://jswebdesign.co.uk/articles/ETp54_Stanford_article.pdf
[3]See more at: http://www.integrating-technology.org/#sthash.fdT9ZKrb.dpuf
[4]See more at http://www.moodle.org

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

Fern Levitt (*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. 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 would 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 those of 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 or write to us at 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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An Answer to a Letter

(target material of this lesson: the letter combination –er and the two meanings of the suffix -er)

The Fox family has dinner together on September 23. After dinner, they discuss the letter they got this morning from Mother's brother Peter, the baker.

Here is the text of the letter:

Dear family,
I won a prize in a baking contest - free plane tickets!
They're only good until the end of September.
Can we come to visit you for a week?
Love,
Peter

David said, "Peter sent us a paper letter. The Internet is faster, but remember, Peter doesn't have a computer!
We have to answer quickly!"

Mother thinks. "A paper letter will take longer than a week to arrive. If we answer by letter, it will be too late!" Max said, "But Peter doesn't have a computer, so we can't answer over the Internet!"

Valentina said, "We have their number. Let's just call them!
It's faster and better than sending an answer by letter or by computer!"

"Valentina, you're a good thinker! We can call them," everyone said happily. And they did!

© 2010 Text by Fern Levitt, Pictures by Julia Filipone-Erez

WEBQUESTS MADE EASY

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In an age of advanced technologies and their integration into the classroom, teachers are always looking for an ideal tool that will improve learning skills. Some tools are better than others. Some are simple and can be grasped within minutes, offering a single wonderful use or perhaps a plethora of uses, while others require a lot of 'learning' on the part of the teacher before they can actually be used in class. Of course there are those that are so appealing that the user is tempted to start using the tool, only to find that it isn't very helpful.

As teachers in the classrooms, constantly facing the changes and demands of the Ministry, the field, the school, the students and of course the ever changing world in general, it is important to find a few useful tools to make the job of teaching a little simpler and more enjoyable.

A wonderful tool that is available freely on the internet is called a WebQuest. WebQuests are a wonderful way to have students work collaboratively on a project or performance based task. The WebQuest is designed specifically for your class and its needs, thus enabling absolute connectivity between whatever is being done in class and the task that the students are performing.

One of the best features of the WebQuests is that they are enclosed. The resources offered to the students are specific and the students don't have to go looking for anything. They use what they are given and are in safe territory. Many of us fear sending the students to the vast and not always friendly world of the Internet; here it's safe, as you've checked each site yourself.

So what exactly is a WebQuest? "A WebQuest is an inquiry-oriented lesson format in which most or all of the information that learners work with comes from the web" (Dodge 2007). With this in mind, the aim of a WebQuest is that the students will not do only what the task demands, but that they will learn something from the process.

Using Ready-Made WebQuests

To get an idea of exactly what a WebQuest looks like, you can access http://WebQuest.org. This is where it all started. On this site, beyond the background information, there is an opportunity to find WebQuests that are available for use in the classroom. By going to http://questgarden.com/search/ you can type in the topic you are looking for and find WebQuests that have been made by others and are shared now with everyone. While these WebQuests are not necessarily comparable with what you are teaching, they may offer a good starting point, or even just an idea of what kind of WebQuest you'd like to make on your own.

After you've written in the topic you are searching for, you'll get a list of available WebQuests and other relevant information, such as the grade level for native English speakers, content area (social studies, language arts, math, science, etc.) as well as the reading level needed to be able to work with this WebQuest.

Once you've chosen the WebQuest you think will be right for your group, click on the correct link and surf the quest. You'll see all the different elements that a WebQuest should contain to ensure it's complete. These elements are:

On the Students' Site:

• An introduction for the students

• A task description

• A detailed step by step description of the process explaining to the students what exactly they are supposed to do

• An explanation of their evaluation

• A conclusion – something that will congratulate the students for a job well done.

• Credits (where due)

• Teacher's page link

On the Teacher's Site:

• An introduction for the teacher

• A description of who the learners are (who this WebQuest is aimed at)

• The curriculum connection (usually this is called Standards)

• The process of the task – what the students will do and what the teacher must do at each step

• Resources – what the students will need so you'll know what to get ready

Student's page link

If any of these are lacking, or are not clear, you'll find it much harder to work with a WebQuest that hasn't been fully thought out. So choose carefully and check the WHOLE WebQuest before you bring it to class.

Creating Your Own WebQuest

Technologically, creating a WebQuest can be very simple. As long as you can create a document with hyperlinks, you can create a WebQuest. That means a WebQuest can be created in Word, PowerPoint, and even Excel! If you're going to call it a WebQuest, though, be sure that it has all the critical attributes.

According to Bernie Dodge (2007) "a real WebQuest...

• *is wrapped around a doable and interesting task that is ideally a scaled down version of things that adults do as citizens or workers.*

• *requires higher level thinking, not simply summarizing. This includes synthesis, analysis, problem-solving, creativity and judgment.*

• *makes good use of the web. A WebQuest that isn't based on real resources from the web is probably just a traditional lesson in disguise. (Of course, books and other media can be used within a WebQuest, but if the web isn't at the heart of the lesson, it's not a WebQuest.)*

• *isn't a research report or a step-by-step science or math procedure. Having learners simply distilling websites and making a presentation about them isn't enough.*

• *isn't just a series of web-based experiences. Having learners go look at this page, then go play this game, then go here and turn your name into hieroglyphs doesn't require higher level thinking skills and so, by definition, isn't a WebQuest.*

So what does this mean for you? Your WebQuest, when you decide to create it, must include all the elements that were mentioned earlier to be considered a complete WebQuest.

Remember, you can use Word to create your WebQuest, or you can use PowerPoint (it might be easier to see it like pages in a site using PowerPoint). When you've finished, bring it into class in .pdf format, so the students can't accidentally delete anything. Of course you can also join WebQuest.org and use their templates. To do so would require registration and a fairly small fee for a two year membership period.

Step By Step Instructions:

No matter which way you choose, you still need to include all of the correct elements. Below is detailed information about what should be included in each section.

You have to create both the Students' section and the Teacher's section.

Your WebQuest should include the following sections:

Students' Section:

• Introduction:
  ❍ This should include an introduction to the task they are going to do at the student's language level. It should NOT include the task, but just a general background of what the topic is and what they will experience.

• Task:
  ❍ This will include details of their task, i.e. what they are expected to produce by the end of the WebQuest. This could include a detailed list of what they are going to produce but it is NOT the process they will be undergoing, just the steps.

• Process:

  ❍ Here you provide detailed step by step instructions of how the students are going to do each step. Here you are to provide the student with specific information as well as the relevant links for each section. DO NOT send them to find websites but give them specific sites with specific information to look for on the websites that you've checked and know are useful.

  ❍ Make sure the links are easy enough for the kids to use as well as containing the relevant information for their task, taking them to the exact spot they need to be. DO NOT send them to the home page of a website unless what they need is right there. Send them to the specific webpage of the site.

  ❍ Each link or step should provide detailed, clear instructions so that the students go to the website and know EXACTLY what to do.

• Evaluation:

  ❍ Place a CHECKLIST here for the students to be able to check off what they've done and to ensure they haven't forgotten to do something.

• Conclusion:

  ❍ At this point you should be congratulating the students for doing a great job.

• Credits:

  ❍ Give credit where credit is due.

Teacher's Section:

• Introduction:

  ❍ Introduce the WebQuest and its main aim as well as as the rationale. This is aimed at fellow teachers, so language level is not an issue.

• Learners:

  ❍ Describe which student level it is aimed at and who could/should be able to do this WebQuest.

• Standards:

  ❍ Which Domains and Benchmarks are covered here? For the National Curriculum in Israel, you can copy and paste this from: http://www.education.gov.il/tochniyot_limudim/english.htm

• Process:

  ❍ Describe the step by step process the students will need to do and what the teacher's job is in this process.

  ❍ Give plenty of detail so that anyone can use this. It should be a detailed lesson plan.

• Resources:

  ❍ Make a list of the resources you've used that helped you create this site.

Before class:

Once you've finished creating the WebQuest, ask your friends, family, and children to try it out. It's important to make sure everything works before you bring it to class.

When you bring it to class or the computer room, make sure, at least once before the class begins, that the entire WebQuest is running smoothly. Technology, as much as we love it, always has to have a day off when we need it most. Technical problems may arise, so be ready. Make sure the Internet is working; make sure every computer has a copy of the WebQuest up and running. Leave nothing to chance.

In class:

Explain the notion to your students. Tell them they'll be working in small groups together on a WebQuest. Very briefly explain what their task is. Don't forget, you've given them clear, simple instructions and descriptions on the WebQuest, so very little verbal explanation is required.

Have the groups sit in front of the computer, read their instructions and get to work.

You decide how much time you're allowing the students to complete this task, but a well thought out WebQuest will always take at least three lessons. This is an extensive task and should be given the time needed to work on it. You can allow them to work only in class, or also at home. It will depend on Internet service in your school and in the students' homes. This is completely up to you.

Always allow for one more lesson where the students will present their products. This is a wonderful lesson in which both you and your students will learn how much they've learned and how well the WebQuest worked. You may also find out what didn't work in the WebQuest and that will enable you to make any corrections needed for future use.

To sum up, WebQuests are a different way of preparing research tasks, performance based tasks, or projects for the students to work on. The benefit of WebQuests is in their simple design. They are rather easy to prepare, and they can be used over and over again, with simple tweaking and updating.

The main benefit of a WebQuest over an assignment on a sheet of paper is the appeal of the task. Students today

enjoy using the Internet. The entire WebQuest is based on the Internet and the Internet is still a huge attraction. The attraction creates motivation and motivation encourages learning.

Another important point is that a WebQuest is safe because it is enclosed. The students aren't expected to go anywhere else to look for what they need, yet there is enough room to maneuver so that each group of students is able to produce their own original work. This is very important to ease the minds of both educators and parents.

WebQuests are enjoyable, educational and appealing. What more could we possibly ask for in our ESL / EFL classes? And it all comes wrapped in a nice neat package.

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LISTENING MAKES THE EAR GROW FONDER

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Then you should say what you mean." the March Hare went on. "I do." Alice hastily replied; "At least I mean what I say--that's the same thing, you know." "Not the same thing a bit!" said the Hatter. "You might just as well say that 'I see what I eat' is the same thing as "I eat what I see"!' [1] If we go along with the Mad Hatter's reasoning, is 'hearing what you like' the same as 'liking what you hear'? They aren't exactly the same, BUT, in our case, one will hopefully lead to the other.

We all feel safe and snug around familiar faces, places and sounds. Take for example Beethoven's famous piano piece, Fur Elise. It probably isn't more sophisticated or melodic than any of Beethoven's other piano pieces. However, most of us, raised in western society, know it because either we ourselves or someone else in our family or neighbourhood has played it. It brings back fond memories. It's part of who we are. Languages are the same. We prick up our ears when we hear the sound, rhythm and intonation of a language we know. We feel we belong there.

Our classroom is like a laboratory where students are introduced to a foreign sound. Our first and initial goal in the pre-foundation level is to make that foreign sound theirs – to ease their way as they navigate in this strange linguistic surrounding. The more our students listen to authentic English, the fonder they become of its recognizable sound and rhythm and the freer they are to imitate it. "God gave us two ears and one mouth, so we can hear twice as much as we say."[2]

Today we all want to go natural, whether it's natural organic food, natural births or grandmothers' natural medicine. Is our desire for authenticity in foreign language learning part of this trend? I believe it goes far beyond the current fad. Learning a foreign language is actually based on and expands learning our mother tongue. Christopher Morley, the American journalist and novelist, once said, "There is only one rule to become a good talker - learn how to listen." That's exactly what happens with babies. They spend the first 9 to 36 months of their lives just listening. When finally they're ready to produce words and sentences, we all marvel, "WOW! They understand and know so much! It's a miracle!" Actually, they've been quietly learning for months until they're ready to imitate. "A good listener is not only popular everywhere, but after a while he knows something."[3]

This is where today's online programs are a huge asset to both language learners and teachers. You don't have to take your students on a field trip to London or New York in order to expose them to native British or American English. It's available in online programs. These are usually focused on our two natural senses of sight and sound. Even those students who aren't focused, but are in the classroom where they hear English spoken, are learning. They're absorbing the language unintentionally (just like babies do with their mother tongue). Online products like www.brainpopesl.com and sites like www.English-online.org.uk or www.learnamericanenglishonline.com encourage their

[1]Carroll, Lewis, A Mad Tea Party, Alice in Wonderland
[2]Irish saying

[3]Wilson Mizner

learners to look, listen and imitate. They enable learners to listen to the flow and sound of the foreign language and repeat it by recording themselves over and over again until they sound like the original. Practice makes perfect. Alongside the traditional pencil or pen, learners can use their ears and voices. Technology provides them with diverse tools to practice. In addition, it helps us, their teachers, to open our classroom to the different kinds of learners. Students can immerse themselves in the language spoken in New York or London without paying for a flight ticket.

Do you remember the dwarfs' song in Disney's version of Snow White, "Just whistle while you work"? Today's language learners can sing, "Just listen while you learn." (which is the same as 'Learn while you listen.' ☺). The more you listen, the fonder you become of the language and the more you learn.

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POINTS TO PONDER

WHY BRING ART TO OUR ENGLISH CLASSROOM

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It's Monday morning in tenth grade. Ms. Randal, the English language teacher, begins her 50-minute class telling students a true story. It is about the life of a famous person, Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, who had been permanently badly injured in a major traffic accident in her youth. The students seem impressed, especially by **Frida Kahlo's** strong determination to carry on with her life despite the gradual deterioration of her health. "I am not sick. I am broken. But I am happy as long as I can paint", were the words of this painter whose life was a true lesson in persistence. And before the teacher has the chance to request any response, one boy eagerly begins to describe a recent traffic accident in the neighborhood. Others follow adding frightening details with the help of peers and the teacher.

After a few minutes of this conversation the teacher directs the students' attention to a picture large enough for everybody to see: Frida Kahlo's **The Bus** (1929). The picture seems to depict the moment before the unexpected accident. And it is said that the woman sitting at the far right of the bus, wearing a silk scarf represents Frida herself. "Where are all these people?" "Which one is Frida do you think?" "What was her life like before the tragic event?" "What was her daily routine like, and how has it all changed since the accident?" the teacher asks.

Following this plenary session, in which students are invited to first describe and then predict, speculate, imagine, and relate to personal experience, they work through a variety of both accuracy and fluency-oriented activities in writing, reading, listening and /

or speaking, basically depending on time, students' needs and the objectives of the lesson. Within this real context, students are encouraged to further develop their language skills beyond the ordinary and sometimes dry topic of "everyday activities" or "jobs and occupations", but with added value. Students will come out of this classroom not only being able to better perform in English on this particular topic, but also intellectually, spiritually and culturally enriched.

The above description provides an example of a short English language lesson around a work of art. But before discussing the why and wherefore of bringing art to our classroom, allow me to go back to the lesson and expand on some concepts: the true story, the picture, the plenary session and the context. The fact that the teacher begins her lesson by telling a true story has two important effects:

1. It hooks the students' attention right from the start ("… before the teacher has the chance to request any response, one boy eagerly begins to describe …)

2. It helps bring the real world into the classroom thus providing a reliable anchor on which students can adapt new knowledge.

Furthermore, the use of a picture, actually a piece of authentic cultural material as visual support, affords the students a better chance to focus their attention on the subject because the visual itself provides structure and organization as a unit. Lessons reinforced by visual displays encourage spontaneous language and inspire pupils to develop their own ideas for creative work.

More importantly, as we can see from the description of the plenary session, the picture affords students the chance to engage in higher order thinking skills (HOTS) as students are motivated to predict, use their imagination, speculate about the narrative being depicted and then make connections with personal experiences. Finally, the context created by the use of authentic material – both orally (the story) and visually (the painting) coupled with the plenary session enlivens the class and creates a more positive attitude towards learning. Hopefully this should encourage the students to take more language risks – so much so that students are more ready to take risks despite the fact that they may be lacking the necessary production vocabulary.

Now on to the topic of this brief discussion: Why bring Art to our English classroom? While the lesson description and its brief analysis are already indicative of the usefulness and suitability of art as visual support for our English lessons, there are still other important reasons to justify this choice of classroom material.

First of all, **ART carries both** explicit and implicit information affording teachers the chance to develop in students not only language skills but also **thinking skills**. When students are engaged in the description or narration of what they are looking at (i.e. what the picture denotes), they develop language and lower-thinking skills; when asked to hypothesize, to predict, to speculate, to compare and contrast, opinionate or synthesize what they see (i.e. what the picture *connotes*), they develop the language of reason and judgment as well as higher order thinking skills.

Secondly, **ART is uniquely qualified to develop in students the habit of taking the time to think.** In our daily lessons we are more often than not, focused either on the "right" answers or the completion of a task, a unit, a test. Thinking time is something we barely have time for in our lessons. With art we are compelled to take the necessary time to decode hidden messages, metaphors, etc. which in turn promotes thoughtful looking.

Furthermore, **ART helps young people to see and understand that "problems can have more than one solution"**[1] and that "reality is multiple perspectives"[2]. Many times artists themselves offer several renderings of one and the same scene, character or event. Thus, unlike much of the school curriculum, including of course the English language in which correct answers and rules dominate, in art personal opinions and speculations count and multiple interpretations can be accepted. Consequently, students are offered a safe space to share different readings of a work of art with

an added bonus: they are required to respect, tolerate and practice listening to one another.

Another point is that ART is for the most part embedded in *real historical, cultural and social contexts*. This affords students the opportunity to expand their background knowledge, which in turn, improves learning in all areas of the school curriculum. It also facilitates the development of positive transfer, allowing students to make connections of content within various school subjects.

ART connects well with all school subjects. It offers a dazzling array of visuals from all periods, all parts of the world, from everyday situations in different cultural settings and social contexts. There are works that depict elements of nature, of Man and his material creations as well as his dreams and more. In art, EFL teachers can find visual support for any topic in their syllabus and textbooks: e.g. To teach description of people, family life, work and occupations, food, situations of human interest, historical events, social and sports events and so on.

The above attempts to simply introduce the discussion on why bring art into our English classrooms. There are countless reasons to support its use in our lessons, but as is often the case in class, there is not enough room in this article for more considerations. I will simply end my argument with a list of some of the many activities students might engage in while looking at a piece of art:

1. Observe and describe factual information
2. Recognize familiar elements and make associations by applying given knowledge
3. Problem-solving: attempt to recognize a problem and seek solutions
4. Compare and contrast
5. Analyze prominent elements of a piece of art
6. Engage in open discussions: hypothesizing, inferring, suggesting
   a. possible message of the piece of art
   b. influence of the painter's life / background
   c. the mood portrayed in the piece of art
   d. what is going on in the picture
   e. historical period and cultural context
   f. socio-political connotations
7. Story building
8. Dramatization of what is being observed
9. Simulations: engage in conversation with the artist or write a letter to them
10. Change or suggest a new title for the piece of art

In short, works of art, with all of their attributes can offer a way of teaching and learning which respond to the many educational demands of the 21st century. Much of the complex information that we need to process every day in our modern life is transmitted through visuals. The use of art as visual support in our English Language classroom can help "upgrade" not only what students see and observe inside and outside the classroom, but also foster higher order thinking skills. English teachers do not need to be art experts to conduct lessons around works of art. There are no right/ wrong answers in art. Art is open discourse. You can work with art the same way you do with any course book illustration. Give it a try and you will experience a world of difference.

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BAD LANGUAGE
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Question: Is bad language just about swearing, slang, and bad grammar or are there any other aspects to consider? Is it just a case of rearranging sentences as Winston Churchill's famous example: *"This is the sort of English up with which I will not put."* or correcting *"I'm only going to take one."* to *"I'm going to take only one."* If not, what is bad language?

The answer may include:

swearing / profanity / blasphemy	sloppy speech	gobbledegook
non-standard (whose standard?)	ungrammatical	bad diction
jargon	mumbling	ethnic slurs
affectation	minced oaths	carelessness
not Politically Correct (PC)	misuse	accents
dialects	taboo words	malapropisms

This list could also include:

Catch phrases e.g. "Me Tarzan, you Jane"
Americanisms! e.g. "I guess" instead of "I suppose"
Unintentional substitution of words e.g. "I resemble that remark" or "Comparisons are odorous" from *Much Ado About Nothing*.

But before coming to a specific answer or definition, let's see if bad language is a really important subject and worthy of discussion. According to the Book of Books, (Judges 12:5-6) it most certainly is.

"And the Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites; and it was so, that when those Ephraimites which were escaped said, Let me go over; that the men of Gilead, said unto him, Art thou an Ephraimite? If he said, Nay; Then they said unto him, Say now Shibboleth: and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it right. Then they took him, and slew him at the passages of the Jordan: and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand."

Shibboleth: a very old idea or custom you think is no longer suitable or relevant for modern times, i.e. it is an abandoned doctrine. The New Testament (Matthew 5:37) was somewhat gentler, but still saw Bad Language as a crime.

"But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."

A milder i.e. less fatal way of ridding society of Bad Language comes from this letter to the 'Radio Times' in July 1988. It was titled: Right to Censor.

"Andrew Collins (letters 18-24 June) complains that the language was butchered in the recent screening of "Apocalypse Now" and I recall a similar letter of complaint following the film's previous showing. Could I for one congratulate the BBC for removing offensive language which neither enhances the quality of the film nor diminishes its powerful effect. To consider 'bad language' adult is infantile. If Mr. Collins' adrenalin truly does race in anticipation of its transmission then perhaps he should seek his entertainment elsewhere.

Meanwhile, let adults read by example and let us have less offensive language on both television and radio.

Mr. S J Redfern

Cheshire"

Swearing

The most obvious example of Bad Language is swearing/cussing, using profane, blasphemous and impious language. The British anthropologist Edmund Leach categorizes swear words into three main groups:

1. words to do with sex, sex organs, excretion and bodily functions

2. words connected to religion such as: Jesus, Christ etc.

3. abusive words connected with animals, as calling someone a cow, bitch etc. Note: Children start off with 'dirty pig' and then 'improve' as they grow up.

Some words may change categories or more or less stop being understood as swear words or Bad Language, e.g. 'bloody,' which according to some linguists was once a reduction of 'By our Lady' (Mary), but today is used so much, can it be called a swear word? By the way, certain words, if based on their French/Latin roots are considered acceptable e.g. defecate, as opposed to the Anglo-Saxon equivalent –shit. The latter is taboo, a Tongan word from Polynesia.

Incidentally, another example of this Latin/French versus German-based synonym pairing may be found in the following example. A smart well-dressed lady 'perspires' while a building worker 'sweats' on the same hot day.

And if we are looking for what the literati had to say about Bad Language, let us see what the American poet, Ogden Nash had to say about the use of such euphemistic language in the following:

Ode to the Four Letter Words

Banish the use of the four letter words
Whose meaning is never obscure.
The Anglos, the Saxons, those bawdy old birds
Were vulgar, obscene and impure.
But cherish the use of the weasling phrase
That never quite says what it means;
You'd better be known for your hypocrite ways
Than vulgar, impure and obscene

This use of euphemisms, replacing taboo words with other words and expressions isn't only about sex and bodily functions, but also about unpleasant and uncomfortable subjects such as "death." Examples include:

passed on, gone to the happy hunting ground, croaked, popped his clogs, kicked the bucket, gone to rest in Abraham's bosom, met his end, happy release, untimely end/ demise, breathed his last, departed this life, gave up the ghost etc. i.e. anything instead of saying: He/She died.

Question: Is this bad or evasive language a way to beat around the bush, to pussyfoot around the grim truth?

Ogden Nash in another poem has a quip about this subject of using euphemisms instead of 'telling it as it is.'

"When in calling, plain speaking is out;
When the ladies (God bless 'em) are milling about,
You may wet, make water, or empty the glass;
You can powder your nose, or the "Johnny" will pass.
It's a drain for the lily, or man about dog
When everyone's drunk, it's condensing the fog;
But sure as the devil, that word with a hiss
It's only in Shakespeare that characters" ****

Note: You will notice that Hebrew also has a wide range of euphemisms for getting around the 'death' question.

Minced Oaths

Another way of getting around swearing and profanity is through the use of <u>Minced Oaths</u> or pseudo-prophanities or deleting expletives. "Mince", in this instance, does not mean the mince as in 'minced/chopped meat' but 'to restrain vocabulary to be within the bounds of politeness as used in: "I'll not mince words with you."

Examples of such 'oaths': *Bloody* becomes: 'bleeding,' 'ruddy' (rhymes) and 'blooming'. Perhaps the most famous example of 'blooming' appears in Pygmalion when Eliza says, "Not bloomin' likely!" (Later we'll have more examples from literature.)

* "Damn" becomes darn

* "God' becomes Golly, Gosh and Gee, or Cor, as in Cockney, God Blind me, becomes Cor Blimey! 'By God' becomes By Jove.

* "Hell" becomes heck

* "Frig" is used instead of ….

* "Sugar," "shoot", "shucks" and "shite" instead of…. (As I noted at the beginning of this talk it would be hard to keep this lecture 'clean'!)

* "S.O.B." is used to replace 'son of a bitch' etc.

Dated and historic examples of euphemisms/contractions include: 'sblood = God's blood, 'slight = God's light (Ben Jonson), strewth = God's truth, zounds = God's wounds, Gadzooks = God's hooks (nails on the cross) and egad = Oh God.

Note, this last group of words today sounds very quaint and dated, which is a remark which can be used about SLANG, a topic we will deal with soon. The use of minced oaths is normally accepted, but not always.

Examples:

1. A writer in 1550s considered "idle oaths/ minced oaths" e.g. 'by cocke' (by God) as "the most abominable blasphemy."

2. Words as "sblood" and "zounds" were omitted from an early Folio version of Shakespeare's "Othello" (probably by Puritans.)

3. In 1941, a Federal judge threatened a lawyer with contempt of court for using the word "darn." Incidentally, we were all brought up to use such minced oaths when we were small kids, as 'poo-poo' 'kakki' and 'pee-pee' etc.

Minced oaths in fiction

Problem: Writing about rough characters who swear without actually putting such words to paper. This was done so as not to offend readers or have the work censored. In 1919, Somerset Maugham wrote the following with reference to his novel, *The Moon and Sixpence.*

"Strickland, according to Captain Nichols, did not use exactly the words I have given, but since this book is meant for family reading, I thought it better – at the expense of truth – to put into his mouth language familiar to the domestic circle."

In *The Naked & the Dead* Norman Mailer uses the word 'fug' instead of the regular Anglo-Saxon expletive. Other writers have used 'fup' as in *Father Ted*, or 'frack' in the TV series Battlestar Gallactica and 'fren' in the TV series Farscape. 'Fudge' is used in South Park and Stephen King used '*smuck*' in his 2006 novel *Lisey's Story*. So please note, that even in these modern times, self-censorship is at work. Irish writing often includes '*fokking*' or '*fekking*' which maybe self-censoring or trying to capture the accent. Also *Time Magazine* today writes "f***" when quoting someone. Perhaps the most famous example of ripe language, at least in films in 1939, comes from the film *Gone with the Wind* when Clark Gable / Rhett Butler's famous last words to Scarlett O'Hara were: "Frankly my dear, I don't give a damn!"

Slang

How would you define Slang? How about: Slang is the use of informal words and expressions that are not considered standard in a particular speaker's dialect and language?

The Oxford English Dictionary defines slang thus: language of a highly colloquial type considered as below the level of educated standard speech, and consisting either of new words or of current words employed in some special sense. (This definition sounds a bit prissy and moralizing to me.)

One of the problems about defining slang means that you have to make a distinction between slang and colloquialisms. According to the linguist Gilad Zukerman, slang is informal, often transient and used by specific social groups such as teenagers, soldiers, prisoners etc., whereas colloquialisms are words used in informal speech which is not for specific groups, and contains contractions such as: isn't you're, haven't etc.

The definition of slang that I like best was written by the US poet Carl Sandburg (1878-1967). His definition: "Slang is a language which takes its coat off, spits on its hands and goes to work."

Unfortunately, slang words may have to work hard, but often they don't last very long. Slang is one of the fastest changing aspects of the language, and using out of date slang can make you look not 'with it' or old fashioned, e.g. "Gone west" from WW1 or "Gone for a Burton" from WW2, which of course means: died, killed or broken is really dated. Another example: 'fretful' (*Hamlet* and *Henry VI, Part II*) and 'dwindle' (*Macbeth* and *Henry IV Part I*) were slang words 400 years ago in Shakespeare's time.

Therefore, what is acceptable slang with one generation or period may be completely 'out' with the next. Also not only does the time factor play a part, but so too does the geographical location of the speaker. Texan slang may not be understood in New York, and vice-versa, while Cockney slang may not be understood in Scotland, and vice-versa.

People often associate slang with low and vulgar usage and this leads to the idea that slang is a 'lower class' use of language, but this is not true. There is also upper class slang as well as a universal slang which cuts across this class border, e.g. kids = children.

If slang is looked down on, why is it used at all? Eric Partridge (UK lexicographer, (1894-1979) listed 12 reasons, including:

1. Sheer high spirits, e.g. Eliza in 'Pygmalion'
2. exercise in wit and humour
3. to be startling
4. to be different and picturesque, e.g. Eliza in 'Pygmalion' when she describes her low-class family to well-educated listeners
5. to escape from clichés
6. to enrich the language
7. to reduce the solemnity of an occasion
8. to soften a blow, a tragedy
9. to induce friendship or intimacy
10. to be 'in' with a specific group(jargon?)
11. to be secret e.g. among children, prisoners, lovers etc.

12. A variation of slang is the specifically London Cockney Rhyming slang.

Examples which may be included in such an erudite magazine as *Forum* include: Apples and pears (stairs), north and south (mouth),'ampstead 'eath (teeth), tit for tat (hat), whistle and flute (suit), trouble and strife (wife) and many vulgar examples which I will not quote here.

Now, because of films etc. and people's greater mobility, this form of slang is no longer known locally only to Londoners and the above examples are not seen as vulgar. The probable source for Cockney rhyming slang is from pre-1850s underworld jargon.

Now to the other side of the pond (is that slang?) In Language Awareness

David Burnham's article "Police have a Slanguage of their own" quotes New York cops asking the following questions:

"Did you collar the skell?"

"How long have you been back in the bag?"

"I see you got gold tin. Who's your rabbi?"

Which mean:

"Did you arrest the drunken derelict?"

"When were you demoted from detective to uniformed patrol?"

"I see you've been promoted to detective. Who's your high ranked sponsor?"

(Note: However, as this article was written in the 1970s it may be somewhat dated.)

What to do about Bad Language?

This is definitely not a new problem. As we have seen, 450 years ago, in Shakespeare's time (and probably even earlier with the Ancient Greeks) bad language was also seen to be a problem.

I assume the bad language most of us see and hear in the classroom is students shouting 'not nice words' at each other and writing mistakes in their classroom assignments. Obviously we try and correct the various grammatical, spelling, and stylistic errors, and the question is: do we do this efficiently?

Does rewriting essays etc. achieve its aims? How many times can you ask a pupil to rewrite an essay? I think more than once is 'overkill' and will probably kill any joy the pupil has in learning English.

What about "Error Analysis" and going over general class mistakes with the whole class after returning a specific piece of written work? Should we concentrate on one aspect when marking, e.g. spelling or tenses, or go for the whole hog?

What should we do when students write 4-letter words in essays? Are they trying to be smart, or do they really not know how "powerful" these words are? I tell them not to use such language, saying it "can be offensive, gives a bad impression, shows a poor lack of vocabulary, reduces any respect for the writer by the marker" etc.

Should we go further and, as educators, reprimand our pupils for using foul language even if it has nothing to do with their English studies, or do we turn a deaf ear to such an event?

In Bad Language, Anderssohn & Trudgill write:

It is easy enough for parents to criticize the language of their children, their loved ones. It is harder to do something about it. Prohibitions and restrictions will not usually help. And there are reasons why it is hard for them to correct the language of their children.

Let us take swearing as an example. In a Swedish questionnaire study, it was found that 75% of the grown-ups disliked swearing and wanted their children to avoid it. This being the case, it is not hard to understand why it may be difficult to get the message of non-swearing through.

Past solutions included: 'Washing the mouth out with soap' and Bowdlerising. Thomas Bowdler (1754-1825) non-practising doctor and expert chess-player died leaving a vast library of unexpurgated literature. He edited Gibbons'

Decline & Fall of the Roman Empire as well as Shakespeare's plays. His (in)/famous edition said that "nothing is added to the original text, but those words and expressions are omitted which cannot with propriety be read aloud in a family." This effort has been and still is the subject of mockery, but the Victorian poet Swinburne praised Bowdler saying it meant the Bard could be read by any intelligent child.

Bowdlerisms include Ophelia in *"Hamlet"* drowning but not committing suicide. Lady Macbeth's *"Out damned spot"* becomes *"Out crimson spot."*

"God" is replaced by *"Heavens,"* and the prostitute Mistress Doll Tearsheet in *Henry IV* is completely removed from the text.

Is the English language inherently bad, prejudiced and sexist?

Today we all have to be good and PC – politically correct. Therefore we are no longer allowed to call Blacks (which from the 1960s replaced Negroes), but African-Americans etc., and short people are said to be 'vertically challenged' (challenged by what?) I found the following examples on the Google site: "Politically correct vocabulary":

• Bad dancer = overly Caucasian

• Body odour = non-discretionarily fragranced,

• Cheater (presumably on spouse/ not pupil) = monogamously challenged

• Dishonest = ethnically disoriented

• Gang = youth group

• Lazy = motivationally deficient

• Girl = pre-woman

• Male chauvinist pig =swine empathetic

• To nag = to be verbally repetitive

• Perfect 10 = numerically superior

• Quiet = conversational minimalist

• Tree = oxygen exchange unit

Is this Politically Correct language bad language? To quote David Crystal *(Cambridge Encyclopaedia of the English Language)*

Many people reacted strongly to the trend of terminological absurdity and newspapers wrote about MaCarthyism and the end of academic freedom of speech. A writer in the "NY Times" wrote that "PC had become a lethal weapon for silencing anyone whose ideas you don't like."

PC proponents say that non-PC language perpetuates inequality, whereas the critics say that looking for a 'caring' vocabulary is pointless. After all, if someone fails, they fail. Was it not the Blacks in the USA who said 'Black is beautiful?' Surely what is important here is the tone and context used, not just the vocabulary. A personal example of the above is when after having been brought up in the UK,I heard Israeli pupils shockingly calling their teachers by their first names!

Inherent Examples of Prejudice in English

Another aspect of English is that it is prejudicial against women and left-handed people. (Don't dare to be a left-handed woman!) Richard Lederer in *The Miracle of Language* quotes the following examples:

• I believe you are in the right about this issue.

• Her left hand doesn't know what her right hand is doing.

• Smith is the boss's right-hand man.

• When it comes to nuclear physics, I feel out in the left field.

• Melinda is an adroit (right) athlete.

• He's a bad dancer; (overly Caucasian), he has two left feet.

• The FBI has uncovered a sinister (left) plot.

• And to come back to African-Americans, there's a whole lot of anti-black prejudice out there:

• *to give someone a black look, he has a black heart, a black deed, Black Friday, Black humour* (not associated. with African-Americans), Black flags on unsafe beaches, *Black comedy, Blackmail, Black mood, Black ("schvartz") economy etc*.

Lederer can think of only three positive BLACK aspects of language: *black belt* (judo), *a black-tie affair, and to be financially in the black*.

This black, meaning bad attitude, is reinforced when you consider its opposite, white meaning good etc: *White-collar* – professional, *white flag* – peace, surrender, end to violence.

Is using sexist language necessarily Bad Language?

For example:

Bachelor – spinster

Master – mistress

Note: Mastercard, not Mistresscard or something neutral. (Hooray for Visa or Diners!)

To quote Gloria Steinem, "How would a man feel if he graduated with a spinster of arts? Or a mistress of science degree?

Lederer says the only common word-pair in English in which the male form derives from the female is: *widow – widower*.

Queens rule kingdoms, not queendoms, and nobody 'womans' a station, and did Karl Marx 'mother' the Communist party?

In many English names, the female is derived from the male:

Victor – ia, Paul – a / Pauline and Paulette, Henry – ietta, George – ina etc.

Where female names have been used for both sexes, e.g. Marion, Shirley, Beverley, the male use has tended to be dropped over the years.

An important change in this male/female name aspect is with hurricanes in USA. In 1953 the US National Weather Service started using female names alphabetically, but now, due to public pressure, they use male and female names alternately: Alma, Bertram, Charlotte, Donald, Elaine, etc.

Some people have made a fuss over the word HIStory. Is this exaggerating? What about changing the name of the northern town in England from MANchester to Peoplechester? (or due to its climate - RAINchester?)

Or Peopleitoba instead of Manitoba in Canada? Of course this is an exaggeration although I once heard a die-hard feminist insist on using the synonyms: handle, wield and conduct, rather than say MANAGE. This is ludicrous, as the root of manage is MANUS, the Latin for 'hand.' (Make = manufacture etc.)

To sum up, I will quote Antony from Shakespeare's Julius Caesar:

> *For I have neither, wit, nor words, nor worth,*
> *Action, nor utterance, nor power of speech,*
> *To stir men's blood; I only speak right on …*

So speak right on – but without any Bad Language!

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IDENTIFYING NEEDS OF PARENTS OF LD CHILDREN AND A THREE- TIERED APPROACH FOR ASSISTANCE

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Abstract

At PTA meetings, veteran teachers and new teachers are often at a loss to understand and empathize with parents of special needs students. This article identifies parental needs of LD children and gives educators insights into the challenges of parenting a child with Learning Disabilities.

Parents who have Learning Disabled Children have a wide array of needs which require special attention so that they can do the best possible job of parenting the child, its siblings, and maintaining their own marital harmony. LD youth are defined as those having a normative IQ of 80 or above but with at least one deficit in the area of academic achievement, such as spelling, reading or math or having a cognitive impairment such as short term memory deficit (Firth, Greaves, & Frydenberg, 2010).

Information about the learning disability is crucial, as these disabilities are generally caused by cognitive-neurological deficiencies and accompany the individual and their families throughout their lifespan (Geary, 2004, in Givon & Court, 2010). Do new parents consider the possibility that there may be a genetic risk factor of LD in the family? At what point do they start to understand that their child's development is not normative? Where do they turn for information and support and when and how do they commit to intervention?

Parental needs for raising their LD child are based on three premises:

• Accessing accurate information

• Receiving support

• Committing time and resources to intervention

Information

It is vital that parents receive reliable information and they usually require expert guidance in this area. In addition to starting a process of evaluation and assessment for the child, parents undergo great emotional stress as they question their own abilities to parent this child, and readjust their own perceptions of the child's abilities.

They will probably "grieve" the loss of their expectations for their child, but most parents eventually accept and do the best possible parenting.

The assessment, if done early, will provide parents with an important starting point. They should feel relief at identifying the reasons for behavior, delays, under-achievement. Right from the start parents need to understand that their reaction and perception of their child will directly impact on the child's success. This is true even for parents of children who have not been formerly assessed. (Stone, Bradley, and Kleiner, 2002).

How do these expectations impact on raising the child? Parents need to know that when they interact with the child they should not underestimate or under-demand. Parents – especially mothers seem to have a natural sensitivity to their child and as such adjust what Stone et al. (2003) call "maternal directiveness". This means that the mother correlates her interactions with the child's mental age, which compensates for language difficulties and aids in shifting attention to the task. This is important information for parents. Mothers may need guidance in how to direct, when to direct and reinforce thus circumventing problem areas such as attention and speech and language deficits.

Parents also need to be good language models for their children. The child who receives ambiguous

messages not only will not understand, but may not have the skills to ask for clarification. Here parents may identify in themselves the possibility of their own language/attention problems which will impact on their interaction with the child. This raises an additional set of challenges for the parents (Stone, et al 2002).

Support

Support for parents of LD children needs to be three-tiered. It starts in the nuclear and extended family where there is a readjustment in acceptance, tolerance and expectations which affects family dynamics. Spousal support is seen as one of the most important factors in warding off stress, anxiety and depression. (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). The support of other family members is important both for the child but also for the well-being of the parents.

The next tier is the community and health services. A comparative study of the British and American system showed that teen mothers in the U.K. who received community based health care faired better as mothers than their U.S. counterparts who went to private family doctors. (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). This bodes well for Israel's "Tipat Chalav" Well Baby Clinics, where infant development is closely documented and early intervention can reach at-risk infants before they enter kindergarten. This system can enhance the possibility of receiving therapy, providing opportunities for social encounters and joining parenting groups which can provide both information and support.

The third tier of the support system should come from the school system. Unfortunately, if assessment is left until junior high, the negative messages, behavior and the strain of earlier years will make support and intervention more difficult.

Even as parents struggle through the educational system, they must know their and their child's rights. Formal diagnosis and assessment will entitle them, by law, to more resources. They should look for educational environments which help the child build its other identities, not just its LD profile. The school should offer options and include both regular teacher and special education teachers in the collective responsibility of accommodating these students. Parents need to advocate for their children and teach their children self-advocacy. A school connected to such an adult community can accomplish a great deal in order to change perceptions, demystify and de-stigmatize the concept of learning disabilities. (Brigharm, Cobb Morocco, Clay, Zigmond, 2006)

Intervention

Teachers, parents and designers and implementers

of interventions need to collaborate to find the best methods for intervention. An ongoing process of assessment can facilitate. It can continue to clarify for parents the core deficits along with the strengths and abilities of their child. The original assessment is a starting point and evaluates the child on various norms, but this child changes daily, so that what was true in grade 5 may have drastically changed by grade 7 as the adolescent brain develops. Needless to say assessment and diagnosis of a learning disability will impact on self image. As parents and teachers it is essential to understand the child's self concept and how this affects their perception of why they experience difficulties. This attribution style will impact on their coping strategies and academic outcomes. From the point of diagnosis the student develops a progression of various cognitive and emotional coping strategies to deal with family, academic and social difficulties (Givon and Court, 2010).

When the child succeeds, parent and child need to recognize the success as a result of the child's ability or strategy or built up skills, and not because it was luck, or easy. (Pearl, Bryan 1982 in Stone et al, 2002). LD Students themselves often attribute their achievement to factors other than their own ability. This negative message, passed on to them by their own parents impacts negatively on their self-esteem and self-efficacy. Parents' belief structures impact on the effectiveness of intervention. Unless parents believe that remediation will help, the therapy may not yield maximum results. Intervention needs to combine both strategies and feedback. (Stone, et al. 2002)

Intervention will only succeed if parents commit time and resources, readjust expectations and support the process. At every stage of the child's development parents need to re-assess, become more informed and adapt their parenting skills.

Finally, if parents are to succeed, their own family, school and community support must be ongoing and easily available to them. As educators whose classrooms include up to 10% of LD students, we must also commit ourselves to becoming informed and to learning and applying classroom accommodations.

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LITERATURE FOR LEARNING

REVISITING THE HOTS[1]

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Introduction

Higher-order thinking skills are necessary for learners in order to attain and use knowledge effectively and efficiently (…). Application of the HOTS will enable learners to be better prepared to cope with the challenges of the 21st century (*Revised English curriculum confidential working draft*, November 2012:13).

Promoting higher-order thinking is indeed crucial to our students' ability to meet the challenges of the literate society and the workplace of our century (OECD, 2006). However, the lists of the HOTS (higher-order thinking skills) in two recently revised documents – *Integrating higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) with the teaching of literature: The teachers' handbook* (updated version, April 2011), *Revised English curriculum, confidential working draft* (November, 2012),[1] and the *Compatibility document* posted on July 11, 2013 on the English Inspectorate's desk, should undergo further revision.

In this article, I first define the term HOTS and suggest an alternative term; second, I present a few examples from my complete analysis of the lists of the HOTS in the first two documents (Segev Miller, 2012), especially with regard to the terminology and definitions used to present them, and make suggestions for revision; and finally, I discuss the implications of these documents with regard to the teaching of the HOTS.

Defining the term HOTS

Theory and research (e.g., Afflerbach, Pearson, & Paris, 2008; Cohen, 1998) make a clear distinction between a skill and a strategy. Learning strategies have been defined as "steps[3] taken by students to enhance their own learning" (Oxford, 1989:1); "special ways of processing information that enhance comprehension, learning, or retention of information" (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990:1); and "plans for solving problems encountered in constructing meaning" (Duffy, 1993:232).[4] That is, strategies are cognitive operations deliberately selected and used. Skills, on the other hand, are executed automatically. In fact, with practice over a long period of time, strategies require less deliberate attention, until they eventually become automatic. That is, the strategies turn into skills. This means that teachers can teach strategies, but not skills, and that students can report strategies they used but not skills.

One of the items in the literature section of the Bagrut exam (Module D for 4-pointers and F for 5-pointers) requires the students to report the "thinking skill I chose" and "explain why you chose that particular

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[1]This article is based on the workshop I conducted at the ETAI Winter Conference in Haifa on December 10, 2012.
[2]This document in not available on the inspectorate's site anymore, and is probably to be presented as, or replaced by, an official document.
[3]Underlining is not in the original.
[4]For a more elaborate definition of reading and writing strategies see: Kucer's (1985) seminal paper.

thinking skill to answer the question". However, if the student has used a skill rather than a strategy, they would not be able to report it. Moreover, since strategies are often used simultaneously, it would be wrong to assume that one can test separate strategies (Alderson, 2000).

At present, these documents are likely to add to the teachers' confusion about how these terms are conceptualized, since they do not use them consistently. The term strategies appears in both the New English Curriculum (2001) and *the Revised English curriculum, confidential working draft* (2012) only three times, in the sense of general *language learning strategies*[5] and once, in the *Revised English curriculum, confidential working draft* (2012) in the title introducing the HOTS: "Higher-order *skills* and *strategies*" (p. 33). The following sentence, however, relates only to the "list of higher-order *skills*".

A series of surveys carried out among Israeli English teachers (e.g., Segev Miller, 2003, in preparation) indicated that they were using these terms, and a few more, such as "techniques", inconsistently in class. Afflerbach, Pearson, and Paris (2008:364) have argued that "such inconsistency can confuse students and teachers and render instruction less effective". In order to avoid this confusion, then, I suggest that the term *higher-order thinking skills* used in the three documents should be renamed *higher-order strategies*.[6]

An analysis of the HOTS

The April 2011 document lists six "higher-order skills that are required to be taught to students answering the justification question on the Bagrut exam" (p. 25): *Comparing and contrasting, distinguishing different perspectives, explaining cause and effect, explaining patterns, inferring, and problem solving*. It then lists these together with the LOTS (lower-order thinking skills, in fact only one *recognizing key vocabulary, setting*, etc.), and another eleven HOTS (pp. 26-29). In the November 2012 document, on the other hand, there are no LOTS, and instead of the HOTS list there are three lists by level – Foundation, Intermediate, and Proficiency (pp. 33, 42, & 51, respectively).

First, it is not clear from the document how the skills (henceforth *strategies*) have been distributed across these three lists, that is, what the theoretical or pragmatic rationale underlying this division was. Second, taken together, these lists are not significantly different from the former, as only three strategies have been added to it: *Integrating* (Foundation level), *justification* (Intermediate), and *persuading* (Proficiency).[7] Finally, two insignificant terminological changes have been made in this document: (1) classifying in the original list has been renamed *classifying* and *categorizing* (these terms are synonymous, and *categorizing* is, therefore, redundant); and (2) *applying* has been renamed *transferring* (again a synonym).

The most recent list, then, appears in the *Compatibility document* (pp. 5 & 8), but is identical to the 2011 list:[8]

1. Applying
2. Classifying
3. **Comparing and contrasting**
4. **Distinguishing different perspectives**
5. Evaluating
6. **Explaining cause and effect**
7. **Explaining patterns**
8. Generating possibilities
9. Identifying parts and whole
10. **Inferring**
11. Making connections
12. Predicting
13. **Problem solving**
14. Sequencing
15. Synthesizing
16. Uncovering motives

Generally speaking, the terminology and definitions of these strategies lack consistency, accuracy, and mutual exclusiveness.[9] One example is strategy (13) problem solving. Since, by definition, all strategies are deliberate problem solving operations (see: Duffy's definition in the *Introduction*, p. 1), *problem solving* is not a distinct strategy, and should, therefore, be deleted from the list.

Another example is strategies (9), (11), and (15) – *identifying parts and whole, making connections*, and *synthesizing*, respectively. These are synonymous terms, and an analysis of their definitions indicates that all three entail similar or even identical cognitive operations and should, therefore, be collapsed into one strategy. On the other hand, strategy (3) – *comparing and contrasting*, is in fact two distinct strategies (see: Sherf, 2010 in Hebrew). Strategy (4) – *distinguishing different perspectives* is identical to *contrasting* and should, therefore, be with it.

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[5]These, however, are not listed.

[6]The Hebrew document Ofek Pedagogi (Zohar, 2009), recommends adopting the term strategy. This recommendation has obviously not been adopted by the author(s) of the HOTS.

[7]These have been deleted from the Compatibility document (see: pp. 5 & 8).

[8]For ease of reference, the bullets in the document have been replaced with numbers.

[9]Some of the definitions begin with the same verb, which implies an identical cognitive operation – e.g., "identify".

Similarly, strategies (6) and (7) – *explaining cause and effect and explaining patterns*, respectively, are in fact one strategy – *explaining*, which, as in the case of all other strategies, can be used for different purposes. The underlying cognitive operation, however, is the same in both. The strategy and the purpose for which it is used should not be confused. Strategy (16) – *uncovering motives*, is a related strategy. The difference between the two, though, is that when *explaining*, students are required to instantiate their prior knowledge (or extra-textual information), whereas when *uncovering motives*, they are required to find the explanation in the text (or intra-textual information).

The relevant literature (e.g., Anderson, 2002; Baker, 2008) makes a distinction between cognitive and metacognitive strategies. These have simply been defined as follows:[10]

Cognitive reading strategies are those strategies that enable students to accomplish the reading task (…). Metacognitive strategies are those strategies which involve self reflection and thinking about learning. The three aspects of metacognition include: Declarative knowledge, such as knowing what the strategy is; procedural knowledge, such as knowing how the strategy works, and conditional knowledge, knowing why the strategy is used (Lawrence, 2007:56).

Such a distinction has not been made in any of the three documents. The list, then, in its reduced version, which has emerged from my complete analysis (Segev Miller, 2012), consists of ten rather than fifteen or sixteen cognitive ("higher") strategies[11] *applying, classifying, comparing, contrasting, explaining, generating, inferring, predicting, sequencing, synthesizing*, and one metacognitive ("highest") strategy: (4) – *evaluating*. What is missing from the list is the metacognitive strategy of *planning*, which, in the case of good readers, interacts with *evaluating* and is crucial to their ability to orchestrate the use of all the other strategies and to manage a successful reading process.

What are also missing from the list are lower-order (or *facilitating*) strategies. These interact with and often provide the basis for the use of higher-order strategies. Research of both L1 and L2 reading has indicated numerous lower-order strategies, such as *previewing, rereading, scanning*,[12] etc.

Implications

The *Revised English Curriculum Confidential Working Draft* (2012:13) suggests that

Learners at ALL levels are <u>exposed</u> to the HOTS (…). Learners at the Intermediate and Proficiency Levels are provided with <u>explicit instruction</u> of the HOTS. Learners at the Intermediate and Proficiency Levels are provided with opportunities to apply the HOTS <u>in all four domains</u> (…). Higher-order thinking skills need to be integrated into the teaching of literature.

However, I would like to argue (1) that ALL learners should be provided with explicit instruction of higher-order strategies, not merely be exposed to them, as it is never too early to acquire strategies (e.g., Epstein, 2008; Report of the National Reading Panel, 2000); and (2) that of the four domains, access to information in general and reading in particular[13] is the best place to start. By the time they have to study literature in the upper grades, all learners should have acquired higher-order strategies.[14]

Research has also indicated that the major differences between successful and unsuccessful readers were in the formers' more frequent and more successful use of metacognitive strategies; and that explicit instruction of reading strategies in general, and of metacognitive strategies in particular, at all levels, promoted students' comprehension (Alderson, 2000; Anderson, 2002; Segev Miller, 2004a, 2004b, 2008).

As the website for the National Council of Teachers of English emphasizes in the overview of the *Standards for the English Language Arts* (1996), exposure or practice alone may not be sufficient. What is needed is explicit metacognitive instruction of strategies and more explicit motivation to use them.

Since assessment should reflect the curriculum, it is also crucial that reading comprehension tests should be designed which require the use of these strategies, rather than lower-order strategies, which usually seem to test language rather than comprehension (Segev Miller, 1995, 2003). That is, assessment should measure more than what students know: It should measure what students are able to do with their knowledge. This ability has been variously referred to in the literature as "going beyond the information given" (Bruner, 2006:7), or *knowledge transforming* (Bereiter & Scradamalia,

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[10]For a more elaborate definition see: Segev Miller (2004a)..

[11]This is about the number of strategies indicated in the teachers' surveys (see: Introduction, p. 2). However, they are not identical. Of these, only predicting, inferring, and making connections (with reader's prior knowledge) appear in those surveys.

[12]For using scanning to find the main idea in a text, see: Segev Miller (2013).

[13]For a more elaborate definition of reading and writing strategies see: Kucer's (1985) seminal paper.

[14]For suggestions for integrating the teaching of reading strategies and literature see, for example: Bernhardt (2011), and Urlaub (2012).

1987), or *understanding performances* (Perkins, 1991).

Finally, in order to bring about a change, especially with regard to the teaching of reading strategies, the preparation of prospective English teachers in colleges and schools of education should change. It is precisely these institutions which should understand, as the recent McKinsey report (Barber & Mourshed, 2007:16) argues, that "the only way to improve outcomes is to improve instruction." This can be achieved by more appropriate preparation programs, which relate to research-validated best practices, as well as by continuous professional development.

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INSPIRATIONAL IDEAS

MY EXPERIENCE PRODUCING A SCHOOL SHOW IN ENGLISH

Bonnie Weinberg *(bonnieaweinberg@gmail.com)*

After listening to Kara Aharon's presentation last year at the ETAI conference on "Putting Children on the Stage", I was inspired to attempt to produce a school show in English at our school. However, unlike Kara, I have no drama, music or recording experience. I'm just an ordinary elementary school English teacher with good intentions, willing to try something new. I figured, if it works out – great, and if not – I won't try it again.

During the summer holiday I approached the school principal with my idea to produce a show in English. He liked the idea and although he didn't know if there was a budget for it, told me to proceed. (Later on, the principal told me that he "doubted it would work" but since I was so enthusiastic about the project he didn't want to stop me!) I immediately began researching drama activities for children and reading-up on how to produce successful plays. My neighbor, who has produced several shows, gave me a book called "Kids Take the Stage", which was extremely useful. Kara was available for support, answering my many questions – technical and theoretical –about producing plays. Best of all, she gave me her version of the "Snow White" play which she had produced several years earlier. I spent time during the summer vacation editing the play to fit our school's needs and downloading the songs we would need.

The plan was to hold auditions right before the Chanuka holiday and to have rehearsals once a week from Chanuka until the week after Purim. This gave us 10-12 rehearsals, each two hours or so. Luckily the school schedule was set so that all students finished early on Sundays. Thus, we were able to stay after school for two hours every Sunday uninterrupted. The goal was to perform the play a week after Purim.

I was counting on the drama teacher's help in directing the play, but unfortunately she went on maternity leave right after Chanuka. So I ended up also directing the play. However she was extremely useful during auditions. We gave the students – two at a time – a section from the play to read aloud. They first practiced

the section together in the hall and only read it in front of us when they felt prepared. While I was checking the students for their fluency in speaking and reading English, the drama teacher was evaluating their body language to see if they had the ability to act well. About 75 students from grades 4-6 auditioned, and together we chose 25 for the cast. I didn't want too big a cast because I didn't want it to be too hard to manage. I chose students who spoke English clearly, were fairly fluent readers, and were willing to cooperate.

I noticed the enthusiasm for the play right from the start. So many students were anxious to audition and participate in the play – even if it meant staying after school on their own time! While we were holding auditions in the teachers' room, the hall was packed with students in pairs preparing their lines. And all of the students were looking forward to returning from the Chanuka holiday to see who had been included in the cast.

I knew that in order to produce a successful play, the group I put together needed to feel responsible for each other, rely on each other and get to know each other well. The first two rehearsals were just about that. We did a variety of drama exercises, voice exercises and short dialogues in pairs. I wanted to get an idea how to cast the girls into specific roles and I wanted the students to get used to working with partners they didn't know. We also read the script completely, explaining any difficult words and got a feel for the characters involved. After the third rehearsal, I gave the students a form to fill out to enable them to choose what role they preferred according to first, second and third choice. Besides an acting role, each student had a role behind the scenes as well, and I had the students also fill out their preferences for that task too. For example, there were roles in makeup, lights, costumes, staging, dance, assistant director, and props. In the end, I took what they had to say into consideration but the students did not always get their first choice.

Once the students had their roles, we started by reading the entire script straight through. At first I let them read with the script in front of them but insisted that they practice the lines at home so they would be fluent. I noticed that the hardest part was paying attention to the cues and to know exactly when to say their lines. After the initial reading, we practiced scene by scene, over and over until it was perfect. As a result, nearly everyone knew everyone's lines by heart. In order to save time, I had the assistant director practice one scene while I took another. Everyone learned the songs, but since they were too shy to sing, we played the

recordings of the songs and they danced to the tunes instead.

When the students signed up to participate in the show, I wanted them to take the show seriously. They had to agree to come to practice on time, not miss a practice without a valid reason and without telling me in advance, and not to talk during rehearsals. This was my greatest challenge. Since I was basically on my own with the cast of 25 girls it was not easy to maintain quiet. When they weren't on stage, I let them bring a book and read quietly or go out of the room. But often they stayed and offered opinions on how things should be done. Once in a while their opinions were worthwhile and we actually adjusted the script accordingly.

The key to success is organization and I was very organized with staging and props. For every scene the cast knew exactly who was to be on stage, in what order they went on and off the stage and what props were needed in the scene. To avoid confusion, we always entered from the right and exited from the left. During practice, no one was allowed on the makeshift stage except those in the scene and only those who used the props were allowed to touch them.

The help I received from the art teacher was invaluable. She made some costumes, props and background scenery, which added a tremendous amount to the final product. Since the production was scheduled for the week after Purim, we were able to borrow many of the costumes. I learned that part of my job as show producer was to negotiate with the school's administrator for a budget for costumes, to organize microphones, and to arrange for the stage to be available on the night of the performance.

Finally it came time for the production. We had planned to perform the play in front of the student body during the morning, but several cast members' parents weren't available to come and see them in the morning. So we invited the parents to come to the dress rehearsal the night before as well. The cast members working behind the scenes produced invitations for the parents, posters to hang up around the school, and playbills to hand out at the door.

I was very nervous before the production. We had practiced the script over and over but some of the students were still making mistakes or forgetting their lines. I had taught the cast to always face the audience when talking, and not to laugh if something went wrong – just continue acting as usual. It was now up to them.

Amazingly, the opening night play was performed flawlessly! The cast remembered their lines perfectly. If there were mistakes, no one in the audience realized. During the play the stage crew worked efficiently between scenes bringing props on and off the stage. The costumes, make up, and background scenery made the show look professional. Parents came and were amazed. They weren't expecting such a performance. It was the first time we performed using microphones which also worked well. After the show we were on such a high! The next day we performed for the school. With the confidence of the night before, the girls excelled! The principal and teachers were full of compliments. Since Snow White is a well-known story, even the younger students could understand what was going on. The kids loved it! Students who were not in the show came over to me to tell me that they promised to brush up on their English skills over the summer so they could audition for next year's production. Everyone is anticipating a new show next year.

While the girls who participated in the show definitely improved their English skills, vocabulary and pronunciation, they also benefitted in so many other ways. They gained confidence in speaking in front of a crowd, learned how to speak loudly and clearly, to annunciate each word, to be responsible for their role, to act as a team member, and to deal with disappointment when they didn't get the part they preferred. The show demonstrated that learning English can be fun.

For me, I am confident that I gave these students a long-term push towards succeeding in English. Now they are motivated to talk in English, having seen how successful they can be. There were definitely challenges along the way with discipline, and there were times of frustration and despair. However, feeling successful at trying something new was worth it all. I look forward to working on next year's show. It's already included in the school's budget.

Bonnie Weinberg made Aliya from Toronto 23 years ago and now lives in Nof Ayalon. She has been teaching elementary school English ever since she came to Israel- both to Native English Speakers and to weak Hebrew speakers. Currently teaching in Shalhevet Elemetary School for Girls, Shaalavim and running an after school program of private lessons as well. Started the "English Drama Chug" as an experimental project last year and due to its success, plans on continuing the project this year.

LESSONS I HAVE LEARNED FROM MY "GOOD FRIENDS":
Patch Adams and Philip Gold

Sarena (Leba) Lieder *(sarenalieder@yahoo.com)*

According to two men whom I consider my good friends, Philip Gold and Patch Adams, life is to be lived, by enjoying every moment with laughter and a positive outlook.

Patch Adams was determined to become a medical doctor because he enjoyed helping people. His methods, unfortunately, were not well-received in the medical and scientific professions. He ignored the rest of the world and through his own personal way of thinking, he helped everyone who needed it.

Patch Adams was quoted as saying:

"Remember laughing? Laughter enhances the blood flow to the body's extremities and improves cardiovascular function. Laughter releases endorphins and other natural mood-elevating and pain-killing chemicals and improves the transfer of oxygen and nutrients to internal organs. Laughter boosts the immune system and helps the body fight off disease, cancer cells as well as viral, bacterial and other infections. Being happy is the best cure for all diseases!"

As a child, Patch Adams tried to kill himself three times as a result of being bullied. After his successful recovery, he realized that it was "stupid" to kill oneself but more rewarding to make a change.

To this day, Patch urges his medical students to incorporate compassion and professionalism in treatment. He believes that humor and play go a long way towards restoring health.

Another very inspiring man is Philip Gold. He is an American Oleh and also the author of Yom Kippur Party Goods. He recently wrote an article in the Jerusalem Post about his personal struggle with cancer. This article reflects the way his positive attitude has helped him deal with his illness. One example is his humorous reply to his doctors when they told him they had to move him to another hospital. He told them that he was pleased because he would be able to steal another pair of pajamas for his collection. The social worker on his case was sure he was in denial. His brilliant response to the social worker was:

"We all get the same number of hours per day. We don't all get the same number of days. If the days turn out to be fewer than expected, that only makes the hours more precious." This quotation is posted on my refrigerator door together with my collection of pictures and feel-good magnets.

Both Philip Gold and Patch Adams are two people that every parent, principal, teacher and friend should meet.

As a teacher, acting like a clown and teaching my students to steal pajamas are not the lessons that I am trying to convey from Philip and Patch. I am trying to convey to them that in everything we do and learn, there is a silver lining. They should try to look at the half-full cup and not the half-empty one. If they feel their cup is becoming empty, they should switch to a smaller cup.

As a teacher, it is my responsibility every day when I stand in front of the classroom to radiate that positive attitude, leaving my personal issues at home and laughing like Patch Adams. It is my responsibility every day when I stand in front of the classroom to remember that my days may be fewer than expected, so I should make my hours more precious like Philip Gold. With both optimism and a positive attitude, students will begin to feel that learning is NOT a chore and they will begin to love to learn.

Reading literature becomes a stage of talent. Even the weak students have pearls of wisdom to share when they feel the non-threatening atmosphere. Grammar becomes fun when you bring their music, their poems and their lives into the lessons. What they say matters, since every hour you have is precious.

Though I have referred to both Philip and Patch as my good friends, I have yet to meet them. I am certain that one day I will get to meet Philip and Patch and we will become the greatest of friends. But until then, I am determined to bring laughter, knowledge and a positive outlook on life to everyone I meet.

Leba Lieder – *Author of the recently released Moti Series: Can't Start Passover without the Bread! and Sailing on Moti's Ark on Succoth. Leba has an MA and BA in English and Education and is presently teaching at Ulpanat Tzvia in Herzelia and Yeshivat Bnei Akiva in Raanana.*

Call for articles!

Share your knowledge and experience with ETAI Forum readers!

We are looking for contributions that cover topics of interest to EFL teachers at all levels, from young learners through university: practice-oriented articles that inspire and suggest improvements to teaching and learning. Here are some ideas:

• helpful information for professional development

• ideas for improving teaching

• sharing of personal growth experiences that have influenced your own teaching

• opinions based on experience and new ideas

• descriptions of programs,

• research-based solutions to problems with an emphasis on explaining and interpreting results, rather than on methodology.

The deadline for submission is April 22, 2014. Articles can be up to 2500 words long. Please send your article to: etaiforum@gmail.com as a WORD 2003 (.doc) (not Word 2007, .docx) file in an attachment to an e-mail. The name of the file should be your family name and the title of the article, or part of it: i.e. Jones_Teaching vocabulary. In the future, past issues of the ETAI Forum may be posted on the ETAI website.

Keep the language non-sexist; use *they* rather than *he/she*.

If you include references, they should be written out in APA style. You can find this in the "OWL Handouts" published by Purdue University – http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/. Cite page numbers in the body of the article if you use a direct quotation.

At the end of the text, include biodata of about 30 words in length, including your official job title, your institution/affiliation, and your email address. This information will be included with your article.

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