

OPENING GREETING BY THE CHIEF INSPECTOR FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Dr. Tziona Levy (*tzionale@education.gov.il*)

Good morning everyone.

I feel very honored and humbled to stand here before you today as the new Chief Inspector for English studies in Israel. Since many of you do not yet know me, I would like to say a few words about myself and my view of English teaching and teachers.

My name is Tziona Levy. I live in Beit Shean and have been teaching there for 27 years, including experience teaching in junior high and high school, as well as 12 years as a counselor for elementary schools in the northern region. In 2013, I completed my doctorate in the field of assessment for learning at Tel-Aviv University. This past year, I pursued a post-doctorate research project about teachers' learning at Haifa University. While my background is varied, most recently I have been the head of the English department for the ORT high school network.

I have always loved learning, and it is this love of learning that drives me to learn from you English teachers, about your students' specific needs and how you think we can move English instruction forward.

I was asked at the interview last week why I wanted the job. This was not an easy question, as I was perfectly happy with my position at the ORT network. However, my answer was and is crystal clear to me, as I stand here, in front of this audience of English teachers and language professionals. I am many things, but first and foremost, I am an English teacher, who loves teaching. I believe together we can do so much to make a difference in English instruction in this country. This is my passion.

I am inspired by the vision of teachers meeting in smaller communities to learn from each other about their teaching, analyze teaching experiences and share best practices.

I believe we must connect with colleagues, create a passion for learning, act on the professional and heartfelt inclinations that engage us as educational leaders. We must be inspired by other teachers' practices and ideas. We must listen to one another. We can be energized by interactions with fellow teachers so that instructional practices can improve, and as a result, students will benefit from our enthusiasm. Finally, we can build upon strengths in order to provide as many authentic learning opportunities for as many different students as possible. Working in learning communities you can discuss hopes and dreams for your students, share your vision and inspiration. Share and analyze best practices and learn to identify the unique strengths of individual learners while addressing teaching and learning goals.

It is my firm belief that empowering teachers to learn from their practice and refine their vision will encourage creativity, wonder, deep learning, joy, engagement, and authentic connections to feed the soul and energize them amid the competing demands of standards and students' needs.

In short - imagine, implement, share, inspire.

When you ask any language learner what is it that they would like to do with their language, the immediate reply is always "knowing how to speak." Here lies an opportunity to put an emphasis on speaking and productive skills. I'm sure you would agree that leaving this to high school is far too late. It is a skill that should be nurtured as early as possible.

I am aware that this will require support and resources (such as the still underused ASK kit that appears on the RAMA site), as well as skillful classroom management and time.

We cannot ignore the great strides forward made in English teaching under the guidance of my predecessor, Dr. Judy Steiner, whose forward thinking brought about so many new directions in English teaching in Israel. And on behalf of us all I would like to thank her for her long years of dedication to the profession.

As I begin this new role as Chief Inspector, I will aim for a continuation of everything that has contributed to our English-teaching world. In other words, I will be seeking **Evolution** and not **Revolution**.

At this point, I would like to mention a few educators who had a strong impact on my professional development. First, a former regional English inspector, Judy Kemp, who was the first to model a successful learning community for me as a counselor. Prof. Elite Olshtain, who taught me about language learning and reciprocity, Prof. Elana Shohamy, my PHD advisor and Mary Greenberg, the former Ort Head of English studies, who taught me first hand all about diplomacy at the workplace.

Finally, I must say a word about our wonderful ETAI, Israel's unique grassroots organization devoted to the development of teacher professionalism. I look forward to fruitful cooperation with ETAI in the years to come. I would especially like to thank the organizers of this international conference for putting together a rich intriguing program, and to thank the teacher presenters for their willingness to open their door into their classroom to share their practices and experience.

Let's all have a truly engaging, enhancing and energizing three days.

Thank you.