

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

As this issue of the ETAI Forum goes to press, the spring holidays are coming up and ETAI is getting ready for the Spring Conference, “All About Assessment,” to be held in at Talpiot College in Holon. But ETAI, far from hibernating during the winter, has been active throughout the season and around the country. In February we had a very successful mini-conference in Nes Ziona, which welcomed some 200 dedicated ELT teachers who braved the cold, rain and wind to attend. ETAI also organized two workshops with guest lecturer Professor Judith Zorfass, attracting teachers in Rehovot and in Jerusalem who benefited from this unique opportunity.

March saw the northern region’s 4th Annual Student ETAI Conference at Gordon College in Haifa, and will ring in the Passover vacation with the Spring Conference in Holon. And of course, plans continue apace toward the ETAI Summer Conference on July 7-8, 2015 at the Academy High School in Jerusalem, with the theme “Teachers=Learners=Teachers.” As ETAI members and readers of the Forum, you are invited to visit the ETAI Website, www.etai.org.il, for more information about the conference, and to access the on-line Speaker Proposal Form and submit your proposals for presentations at the conference. Our conferences are only as good as the participation of our members, and by presenting your expertise and ideas you help advance ETAI’s contribution to ELT in Israel.

I know you will enjoy this edition of the Forum, and I look forward to seeing you at all ETAI’s events.

Eleanor Satlow
ETAI Chair

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of the ETAI Forum comes to you after our special joint issue with ETAS, our Swiss counterpart. A brief introduction to our new articles follows and includes reports on the various mini-conferences that have taken place around the country as well as an exciting addition to ETAI activities –professional workshops given by invited lecturer, Dr. Judith Zorfass of *PowerUp WHAT WORKS* (an organization funded by the U.S. Department of Education to strengthen teaching of English for students with diverse abilities and needs).

For those looking for fresh ideas related to the literature program – Susan Thornhill’s “Poetry from the Beginning” is an exciting and practical article that shows us how to inspire love for poetry. Rittie Katz’s article about “LOTS, HOTS, PLOTS and PLOTZ” encourages us to begin teaching higher order thinking skills in junior high school, using materials that are suitable and familiar to this age level. For our higher level classes, Sara Gabai offers an insightful analysis of Frost’s “Mending Wall”. Karen Guth examines the relationship between the new ‘bridging text and context’ tasks to essay writing skills in her article entitled, “Higher Order Thinking Skills And Writing: ‘Bridging’ The Gap.”

Bridging gaps of another kind – cultural gaps – is the subject of Laura Shashua’s article about her recent participation in a project that examined the tremendous variety of ESL learners in the USA. Marjorie Rosenberg looks at cooperative learning with pointers for achieving success, and Lindsey Shapiro-Steinberg links songs with vocabulary chunking – ideas you will surely want to try out in your classrooms. For a final treat, we have Stephen Byk’s engaging and effective adaptation of the classic treasure hunt to a review of vocabulary and thinking skills – just in time to perk up your year’s end.

Please remember that our ETAI Forum is only as good as the articles that our members take the time to write and submit. If you have given a talk or a workshop at an ETAI conference, or if you have had a particularly successful lesson, why not share with your colleagues. We here at the Forum are happy to help in any way we can.

Renee Wahl
Editor, ETAI Forum