

THE ETAI TEACHER TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT SIG IS LAUNCHED

Part 2: SIG Day

The first ETAI Teacher Training and Development Special Interest Group (SIG) day, held on September 8, 2015, opened with a session on reflective practice, both as a theoretical framework and as applied to a college course, delivered by Dr. Tanya Ben Shitrit. Then we had Elisheva Barkon, who presented the sad state of reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge of incoming and outgoing college students, and what Oranim Academic College has been doing about changing this.

Then we had four practitioners on show-and-tell in proficiency courses: Nancy Peled from Oranim, who showed her students in a clip they had prepared from a scene of “The Importance of Being Earnest;” Debbie Topperoff on oral work which students uploaded to the college Moodle site, and Hyde Park style public speaking (including heckling;) Lindsey Steinberg-Shapiro who presented debating as a medium for oral proficiency including a live on the spot demonstration; and finally Leo Selivan who used film as a means of teaching collocations with a live example and audience participation. Lastly, there was an impromptu addition of data from Tami Aviad on vocabulary size in written expression of non-native speakers (as depressing as Elisheva’s data on reading).

Kudos to Lindsey Steinberg-Shapiro (Chair of the SIG) and Leo Selivan for a job well done. I felt that this mini-conference really consolidated the SIG as a forum for teacher trainers. Bravo!

*Dr. Debbie Lifshitz
ETAI Board Member*

LOOKING FORWARD TO GOING BACK TO SCHOOL

ETAI has long been very active in the north of the country, providing a variety of regional events and conferences to meet the needs of the diversified northern teacher population. Finding dates for ETAI activities during the school year that suits all, often proves challenging. The first ‘Back to School’ conference held at the tail end of the last summer vacation came about in response to this very problem and proved to be a highly successful initiative.

The conference was held at Gordon College in Haifa on August 18th. Nearly 170 dedicated teachers joined together to network, renew energies, share tried and tested ideas and gain new ones to add to their repertoires before the start of the school year. A thought-provoking plenary session entitled “What Teen Learners Can Learn from Children” was given by Leo Selivan. This was followed by a varied selection of presentations by experienced and novice presenters, offering creative and practical ideas to take into the classroom. A rich book and materials exhibition was open throughout the day for conference participants to browse around during the breaks.

We would like to thank the management and English team at Gordon College for their generous hospitality, the book publishers who contributed to the conference kits, the presenters and other ETAI members who volunteered their time and energy, and, of course, all the teachers who participated in the conference. This collaborative effort resulted in the vibrant and successful Back to School conference that we hope will become an annual feature of ETAI activities.

The Northern ETAI Team