



14
Feb

Dear Tziona,

THanks for making the effort to talk with us today. BEofre I sent the official minutes to Mofet, I'd like you to glance over 'your' section quickly, just to check that I remembered the main points correctly. If you think something really needs changing please let me know.

Thanks

Elizabeth

Forum of English Department Heads

Summary of 4th Meeting. 14.2.2017. 9:00-15:00

Present:

Liron Ohion Shochti - Kaye	Gabi Shoshani-Shaanan	Omaima Abud - Haifa Arab College
Laura Major - Achva	Luba Ostrinzky, - Talpiot	Raya Stolyer - Hemdat HaDarom
Iman Gra Alush - El Kassami	Laura Major - Achva	Emmy Zitter - Michlala Yerushalayim
Ofra Rosenstein - Gordon	Sandy Habib - Ohalo	Beverley Topaz - HaKibbutzim
Reem Bashara - Bet Berl	NAtan Ofir EMuna (EAP)	Lindsey Shapiro-Steinberg - Herzog
Susie Rusack - Bet Berl		Elizabeth Karvonen - David Yellin

Apologies / not represented : Givat Washington, Levinsky, Oranim, Sakhnin

Summary of meeting

1. Meeting, greeting and touching base. A general talk on burning topics of the day – notably the Quality Assessment process. Three colleges (Laura- Achva, Luba-Talpiot & Lindsey-Herzog) have started or nearly completed uploading the information onto the site. Others are nearing the



end, still waiting for approval from management or for translations to be done. The majority of colleges have used professional translating services, but a few did it themselves. There are some worries, such as last-minute requests to change language style, etc. There seemed to be some consensus that the people who have been involved in the process for months reach a state of 'saturation' and find it hard to make more changes at the end, after suggestions from senior staff who are only now seeing the document for the first time. A few minutes was spent brainstorming the lexicon of words and concepts used.

2. Tziona Levi - Chief Inspector for English. Tziona gave an informative talk on what's going on in the Ministry. The main points included:

- The National Program to Promote English Teaching in Israel

An Advisory Committee has been established, with five sub-committees :

1. Reading for Pleasure
2. Vocabulary
3. Teaching in a heterogeneous setting
4. Teaching standards
5. CEFR

- Professional Learning Communities

Tziona described the principles behind Professional Learning communities and the differences between these and traditional in-service training. The independent and collaborative nature of these groups make them more effective in developing teachers' professional growth than formal training courses. So far there are 36 English learning communities around the country.

A discussion ensued regarding courses for the 7-9 levels in 'Ofek Hadash ' and Oz Letmura' and whether (and how) PLC's can substitute for these. It is difficult to get authorization to give these 7-9 courses and Tziona requested that any college with ideas for suitable courses should be in touch with her regarding the necessary permission to open them.

- Diversity in teacher population and schools.

English should be an equalizer - giving all children the chance to widen their horizons and learn about the English-speaking world.

Already there are some special programs, eg: cultural awareness in 7th Grade and debating in 9th Grade. MATACH has an online program with virtual teachers, which can also help prepare for Bagrut.

At the same time there are many questions regarding diversity & English learning:



- When should schools begin teaching English? It seems that 95% begin in 3rd Grade even though officially English is begun in 4th Grade.
- Should different populations have specially designed English books to suit them? - Should private companies have a say in content?

- Speaking

Oral proficiency should be a priority. Tziona suggests the 50% of the curriculum should be devoted to developing communication skills. Some ideas have come up like using outside companies eg: Wall Street for this. The Assessment Toolkit ASK kit

- The Common European Framework of Reference. CEFR

There is a move to connect the Israeli English curriculum to CEFR standards. The existing

MOE document regarding teaching standards is to be adjusted to fit the CEFR.

Tziona had planned to explain this in depth, but the time ran out. We will try to find another time to learn about the CEFR and how the colleges will cater to these standards.

- Assessment

The importance of assessment in English teaching. Tziona emphasized that assessment should be an integral part of teaching and all college English departments should offer courses specifically in EFL assessment. Many colleges already do offer such courses.

3. Eyal Ram and Noah Grinfeld made a surprise visit and Eyal gave a brief overview regarding the lack of English teachers and efforts being made to improve the situation.

- This year there are about 100 unqualified English teachers. (Iman & Reem noted that in the Arabic speaking sector there is not a lack of English teachers and in fact some Arabic speaking graduates are now teaching English in Hebrew speaking schools.)

- 860 3rd year students are due to join the workforce next year.

- This year there was a rise of 24% new students studying to be English teachers.

- Three shortened new programs are being planned and about to start for preparing English Speakers (either olim or long-term Israelis) to be English teachers.

- There are 7 'simulation centres' to help in training teachers.



A discussion took place regarding the new requirements needed to be accepted into English teacher-training programs (70% in 5 point bagrut and 100 on the English part of the Psychometric exam or 200 in the Amir exam). Many of those present were unaware of these changes. Not all students who begin at this level will reach a required level on graduation. Also, some populations do not offer 5 point bagrut

Our suggestions for how to improve the training programs included:

- Smaller proficiency classes
- Academic education courses (psychology, philosophy, sociology, etc) to be offered also in English, in addition to the regular English courses

4. Howard Gordon - gave a useful and enjoyable interactive workshop on teamwork and sharing in the digital age. We practiced five different collaborative tools :

Menti.com (mentimeter) : similar to wordle

- Google SLIDES - simpler to use than Google DOCS when working with several groups in a classroom setting
- Goose Chase – a type of scavenger hunt to do in small groups using a mobile phone)
- Quizlet Live – group competition with word definitions
- Plickers – cards for students to hold up a certain way in answer to questions. The teacher photographs the cards to see which groups were correct.

For questions regarding these activities or other interactive queries - email Howard:
howie.gordon@gmail.com

5. Future Plans : IT was agreed that next year the Forum will try to organize a Study Day together with the ETAI Special Interest Group (SIG) on Teacher-training.

Next meeting : Friday 17th March.