# A Way with Words

*I know nothing in the world that has as much power as a word.*
*Sometimes I write one, and I look at it, until it begins to shine.*
Emily Dickinson

## Editor's Note

Slipping into boxing jargon, we've finished the first round in the ring, and we're heading back for Round Two. First semester report cards – completed. Winter bagrut – check. Oral bagrut – by now many of you can recite by heart how many siblings your students have and where their parents are employed. Since the last newsletter, changes have begun in the ministry and it looks like there are more to come. In our community, creative ideas are being exchanged and every idea has a potential "Ah-ha" moment for someone else. The **Touching Hearts** project is just one of a few that have been shared on the mailing list and we hope that we can make a difference by having schools across the country join the fundraiser while getting our students to take small steps to improve their English and get them singing (in English, of course) We ARE the champions.

## "Site-Seeing":
### Useful Sites for Teachers and Students

This edition's sites are dedicated to helpful tools in the teachers' room and at home.

1. How many times have you asked to use a computer being used by another teacher in the teachers' room "For just a minute"? To prevent interference with what they were working on, use an **Incognito Window** and work as

a separate entity. The same can be done at home when multiple users use the same computer.

2. If your texting versus typing speed can be compared to the tortoise and the hare, you can use What's App on your computer and use the keyboard by installing Whatsapp.Web One advantage is that unlike phones that automatically download a picture if you click on it and takes up memory, when you use **Whatsapp.web**, nothing is downloaded to your phone. It is also more convenient for switching between browsers and tabs, but mainly, it solves the problem of "The need for speed."

## Promoting Progress
### In and Out of the Classroom

Meitzav mania is approaching. Studying in the CATS course that used to be mandatory for teachers preparing and grading the Meitzav (another acronym that disappeared somewhere along the line amongst the other changes), the members of the course established that if you are using a regular textbook and doing all the activities, you do not need to invest in a separate book. The ministry advises giving sample Meitzav tests from the past two years only as practice since the tests have been altered to suit the updated curriculum. ➤

- First, check if your students should be tested Meitzav or if their grades get recorded. Notice that the recommended number of students for **הקראת שאלון** should be up to five. *Click here*

- To practice **listening comprehension** at home and at school, try *this site*

- Take a look at the Ministry Handbook's Lexis Charts – students are expected to know Band 1 and a good part of Band 2 as well as basic HOTS. *Revised English Curriculum*

## Food For Thought

### "All my life I've looked at words as though I were seeing them for the first time."
Ernest Hemingway

Hemingway's quote is exactly what you DON'T want to happen to your students on the Meitzav. Since dictionary use is forbidden, students need to have a strong base and the ability to recognize words on sight.

Last year I participated in Leo Sullivan's "Teaching Vocabulary" course. Among the ideas that struck a chord was the concept that we should be teaching *Collocations*. We were discouraged from teaching students words in groups such as body parts, but rather, adjectives with nouns or other combinations. Synonyms should be introduced once a student has a firm grasp of the original word, but not all at once.

Here are some thoughts from Leo Sullivan's blog (with his permission):

### 'Principle 1 - Ban Single Words

Words are never – well, almost never – used alone. I can think of only a handful of words that can be used on their own: *Hurry! Silence…Tragic.* But most of the time words are used in company of other words. So why record them alone? Why teach **accident** only to find that a minute later your students say "He made an accident", when you can teach "have an accident"?

*Make a habit of writing new words on the board with other words that surround them* and encourage your students to do the same in their notebooks. Ideally, write whole phrases or sentences to illustrate how a word is used: 'Have you done your homework?' If time doesn't permit, write at least two words together: "Do homework" "investigate the murder (of)". Remember: *collocations - and not individual words - are minimum units of meaning.*

### Principle 2: Explain less – explore more

Many things in English… simply cannot be explained. There is no reason why we say "heavy rain" and not "hard rain", why buildings can be described as both "tall and high", but people can only be "tall"…

### Principle 3: English word ≠ L1 word

You should try to reduce students' reliance on word for word translation…If you use translation in class, get students to translate whole phrases or collocations….For example, I drew my students' attention how *soft* is not the same "soft" in L1 depending on the nouns it goes with: *voice, soft skin, drink*…. Encourage students to ask questions about how words are used. Get them to look at the examples (and not only definitions!) in an online dictionary or show them concordances with the target word.

### Principle 4: Pay attention to what students (think) they know

This is important for two reasons. If students know "take" and "place", does it mean they know "take place"? Or if they are familiar with both "play" and "host", does it mean ▶

they will understand the meaning of "play host (to)"?... The meaning of many collocations cannot be determined from individual words they are comprised of…. Also, interestingly, most expressions in English….consist of the most common words such as: get, do, come, well, fall etc.'

I recommend you read the entire article and investigate this blog. I may have done a disservice by editing as much as I have. *Click here*

## *Gimmicks and Games*

1. As almost every other reference in this newsletter, this, too, was picked up from a hishtalmut. The source is GAME by Shlomith Ilan z"l. If a student can't figure out if they should add "a" or "an", they should try spelling the word that follows in Hebrew. If the word begins with א, then one should add "an". Example: "Apple" in Hebrew would be spelled "אפל". Therefore, add "an", but, "university" starts with י so you add "a" in front of it.

2. As Chodesh Adar looms, it's time to plan ahead for times when students aren't in the mind frame for a regular lesson. Here are some *brain teasers* to entertain all ages.

# We Want to Hear From You

**In honour of Chodesh Adar,
share your favourite bloopers you've come across while marking.**

Submit them to:
*english@yba.org.il*