



Tempus

ECOSTAR

English as the Cornerstone of Sustainable Technology and Research



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From the Project Coordinator...

ECOSTAR Intermediate Report

It is hard to believe that the ECOSTAR project has already passed the halfway stage, a moment that was marked by the completion and submission of the Intermediate Report to the EACEA (a copy of which you can find in the ECOSTAR website in WP9).

In this report, all the activities and achievements over the first 18 months of the project are detailed and as you will see, they are many and varied. The first draft of the National Framework is now ready to be reviewed by focus groups; initial Learning Packages are ready for piloting in the winter semester; work on the repository for OER for EFL is ongoing, and the fruits of this WP should soon be made available online; the model EMI course, Sustainable Futures, is in its completion number of institutions; the ECOSTAR website is up and running and while still not in its final form, is seeing increasing traffic; quality assurance tasks are being carried out on an ongoing basis to ensure the project is meeting its goals; and dissemination activities have taken place in many of the partner institutions.

There is much still to be done, and at our next consortium meeting taking place at Maastricht University in the Netherlands in September, as well as reviewing progress together, we will also be planning the next significant steps in the project, notably addressing the issue of sustainability. Well done for all the fine achievements to date and good luck to us all in the second half of the project.

Linda



CEFR Symposium at Tel Aviv University

Report from WP1 - Elana Spector-Cohen

The CEFR: From Theory to Practice

On June 11, 2015, the second annual CEFR Symposium, *The CEFR: From Theory to Practice*, was held at Tel Aviv University, Israel. The symposium was organized and sponsored by the Goethe Institut in Israel, the Institut Français in Israel, the UTELI organization (University Teachers of English Language in Israel), and the Division of Foreign Languages and the School of Education at Tel Aviv University. Over 90 people signed up for the symposium, many of them English instructors in higher education in Israel. The day was a follow up to the introductory symposium on the CEFR held at Tel Aviv University in May, 2014.

Highlights of the program included presentations by Prof. Elana Shohamy (Tel Aviv University), *The CEFR:*



PROF BERNARD SPOLSKY

Raising questions in a multilingual era; Prof. Bernard Spolsky (Bar Ilan University, Israel), *Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater! Rescuing the CEFR from the industrial testers*; Mr. Pierre Yves Roux, International Centre for Pedagogical Studies, France, who spoke about *Foreign language teaching: How to avoid a dogmatic approach*; and Susanne Baumgart (Goethe-Institut, Cairo), who discussed *How the CEFR is implemented in schools in Egypt*.

ECOSTAR project members were very much represented at the symposium. To continue the buzz around the project and to promote further dissemination, Dr. Linda Weinberg and Elana Spector-Cohen presented updates on the ECOSTAR project, focusing primarily on preliminary results of the needs analyses and progress on the EMI component, in their talk entitled *Implementing the CEFR in higher education: Update on the ECOSTAR Project*. Dr. Ruth Fortus spoke about the



ELANA SPECTOR-COHEN



DR. OFRA INBAR

ongoing project to translate the CEFR into Hebrew (*Translating the CEFR to Hebrew: Issues in the transadaptation of documents*). Prof. Ofra Inbar discussed *The CEFR in Israeli schools: Can/Should it be implemented*, and Iair Or spoke on *Implementing the CEFR for Arabic and Hebrew in Israel: Prospects and challenges*.

Finally, representatives of the French, German and Spanish cultural institutes discussed aspects of the CEFR at their institutes. They also presented the winning video clips for each of the three languages in the *Let's Speak Europe Video Competition*.

The day closed with Prof. Elite Olshtain (The Hebrew University, Israel) as discussant. A lively discussion ensued and the possibility of forming a forum of representatives from various languages from schools and institutes of higher education was discussed as a means to continue the momentum of the day.

Assessment Workshops in Israel

The new framework for EFL in Israeli HE moves away from the traditional focus on reading comprehension and integrates speaking and writing skills into a curriculum which is more suited to the needs of HE graduates in the 21st century. To introduce Israeli EFL teachers to a variety of assessment methods for these skills, a series of workshops were held in Israel in June. Two ECOSTAR partners, Clive Lawrence from Maastricht University and Carla Fatima Bassi from the University of L'Aquila, both experienced and qualified Cambridge examiners, travelled the length and breadth of the country in order to run a workshop for HE EFL teachers in each region.

EFL teachers from all the universities and academic colleges were invited to attend, and while space was limited at each meeting, 70 teachers benefited from the workshops which were held at ORT Braude College of Engineering in the north, at Shamoon College of Engineering in the south, and at the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya in the centre of the country. The workshops were well received and the opportunity to compare Cambridge levels with those of our own students and to discuss a variety of assessment methods was enlightening and thought provoking. Together, Clive Lawrence and Fatima Bassi made the workshops both informative and enjoyable. "Without a doubt SCE will be implementing the methodologies in our next round of oral and written presentation. Of equal importance, the involvement of other institutions offered a unique opportunity to discuss issues of mutual interest," said Dr. Guy Abrahams, head of the EFL department at SCE.

Many thanks to Clive and Fatima who, despite a demanding schedule and a great deal of travel, managed to keep us all entertained while helping us to gain new insights into the assessment of speaking and writing skills. Additional workshops are in the planning stages.

Materials from the workshops can be accessed here:

<http://tempus-ecostar.iucc.ac.il/mod/page/view.php?id=201>



ASSESSMENT WORKSHOP TEAM AND PARTICIPANTS AT IDC



WP 4 – English Medium Instruction

EMI Workshops at WUELS in Poland:

The phenomenon of English Medium Instruction is growing rapidly around the world, and with it, the challenges facing students and teachers who are learning and teaching their subjects in English. In parallel with developing a new curriculum for EFL in HE, the ECOSTAR project is investigating the issue of EMI in order to understand the implications for the EFL curriculum, and to create a set of recommendations for best practice and implementation in the Israeli HE context. A series of train-the-trainer workshops for EFL teachers who will be supporting teachers and students who will be involved in EMI courses are planned to take place during the second half of the project.

The first train-the-trainer workshop was held at the Wroclaw University of Environmental and Life Sciences in Wroclaw, Poland on 6th and 7th July. This two-day event was organized locally by Jadwiga Bolechowska, head of the WUELS IRO, and Ewa Hajdasz of the EFL department. Registration for the workshop was closed when the numbers reached 100, and attendance was high on both days. Among the participants were both EFL and content teachers, and in addition to attendees from the ECOSTAR partner institutions from Poland, Romania, the Netherlands, Italy, Cyprus, the UK and Israel, people also came from Hungary, Germany and the Czech Republic, making this a truly international gathering and emphasizing the degree of interest in this topic.



(FROM BOTTOM LEFT CLOCKWISE : EWA HAJDASZ (WUELS) , DR. ROBERT KARCZMARCZYK (WUELS) , DR. DAVID HARPER (ULEIC), DR.LINDA WEINBERG (BRAUDE) CLIVE LAWRENCE (UM).
IN THE MIDDLE – DR. VICTORIA ROBINSON (ULEIC)

Following welcoming remarks by Dr. Robert Karczmarczyk, Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, WUELS, and Dr. Linda Weinberg, Coordinator of the ECOSTAR project, Professor Ofra Inbar of the School of Education at Tel Aviv University, kicked off the event with a presentation entitled: “*Introduction to EMI: Setting the Scene*”. This clear and informative talk was followed by a breakout session in which the participants discussed in smaller groups, a number of questions relating to EMI in HE.

Following the coffee break, Professor Inbar and Elana Spector-Cohen of Tel Aviv University addressed the issue of “*What makes a successful lesson*” in a lively and entertaining presentation. Following lunch, Elana Spector-Cohen and Dr. Lisa Amdur of Tel Aviv University gave a presentation on innovative classroom pedagogies entitled “*Why flip the classroom? Constructivist approaches to learning and pedagogical insights*”. Prof. Inbar closed the first day with a summary of the issues covered and opening a discussion with the participants.

The second day began with an introduction to the EMI initiatives of the ECOSTAR project following which Dr. Victoria Robinson of the University of Leicester presented the main elements of the model EMI course, *Sustainable Futures*, that has been created within the project in order to demonstrate best practice. This course is both a stand-alone English Medium Instruction course which will be piloted for the first time in the partner institutions in the 2015-2016 academic year; and also a training tool to be used by EFL teachers to support content teachers who are preparing to teach their own courses in English. Dr. David Harper, also of the University of Leicester, then discussed the development of a Virtual Field Course as an integral learning resource within the Sustainable Futures course. Particularly challenging in EMI is the issue of content-language assessment. Clive Lawrence of Maastricht University addressed this issue in another informative and entertaining presentation entitled *“Matching EMI with the CEFR”*.

A breakout session following these presentations gave the content teachers in the audience the chance to meet with Clive to investigate in more detail ways in which to approach EMI, while the EFL participants had the opportunity to face these assessment challenges head on through small-group work with samples of learning output and preliminary grading guidelines. The discussions were fascinating and informative, but clearly showing that there is much work still to be done in this area.

In the afternoon, Dr. Miriam Symon of the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya, Israel, and Monica Broido of Tel Aviv University, presented examples of support infrastructure for EMI which have been developed at their institutions in a presentation entitled *“Creating the Support Infrastructure of EMI - IDC and TAU Writing Centers”*.



AUDIENCE INCLUDING DR. LINDA WEINBERG
FRONT ROW, JADWIGA BOLECHOWSKA SECOND
ROW

Dr. Shaya Kass of the Open University of Israel briefly demonstrated the Roads to Academic Reading in English programme. Finally, Prof. Inbar wrapped up the workshop by summarizing and discussing with the participants the issues covered and pointing out future directions.

This was a very successful event and our grateful thanks to Jadwiga, Ewa and their team of helpers, and to the Wroclaw University of Environmental and Life Sciences for hosting us so expertly and graciously. We will keep you posted on future workshops.

Field Monitoring Visit

A 2nd Field Monitoring visit will take place on September 17th at ORT Braude College of Engineering in Israel. It will be conducted by the local Israeli Tempus/ Erasmus+ representatives. This is an excellent opportunity at this stage of the project to review our progress so far and to help us continue on in the best way possible. It is opportune that this monitoring is taking place soon after our consortium meeting where we will be able to reflect ourselves on our achievements to date, to voice and discuss relevant issues, address the outstanding challenges, and come up with suggestions and solutions in preparation for meeting with our project officers.

Stay tuned for more communications concerning preparation for the Field Monitoring.

Meeting with Council for Higher Education's QA

In June, Dr. Linda Weinberg met with Dr. Varda Ben Shaul, Deputy Director General for Quality Assessment at the Council for Higher Education in Jerusalem, where she presented the ECOSTAR project. This was an opportune moment to share the aims and achievements of ECOSTAR and talk about future developments. Two members of the QA department subsequently attended the assessment workshop held at IDC on June 25th where they were also able to learn more about ECOSTAR first-hand in conversations with ECOSTAR partners. We look forward to future meetings and collaboration between us.

Focus on a Partner – The National Union of Israeli Students



The National Union of Israeli Students (NUIS) has represented students throughout Israel since 1934 and today is the sole representative of more than 330,000 students in 64 universities and colleges all over the country. NUIS plays a decisive role in the higher education system as well as in the broader Israeli society and has placed social impact through grassroots initiatives on a national level as an organizational priority, while helping to shape the future leadership for Israel. As there is a high correlation between student and national politics, many of the country's mayors and MKs are past leaders of the organization.

NUIS believes that beyond getting an education, students have the ability and the responsibility to help build and shape the society they live in, impacting on that society in the long term. By engendering dialogues and developing understandings based on common values, NUIS seeks to further the relationships between students in Israel and student groups abroad and young leadership worldwide.

NUIS is organized into professional departments that develop and implement policies created for the student community in several areas: Social Involvement, Human Rights and Gender Equality, Scholarships, Academic Affairs, Policy and Research, Government Relations, Minority Rights for Students, Fundraising and Foreign Relations, Spokesperson and Public Relations. The

As part of our vision for the higher education system, in addition to ECOSTAR, NUIS is a member of the following TEMPUS projects:

1. **ESPRIT** – we have been active for over 3 years in creating social benchmarking relating to social responsibility in academia, which should be published in 2016.
2. **IRIS** –this project aims to internationalize Israeli academic colleges in order to expose students to the international academic arena and prepare them for the global job market.

Meet the NUIS partners in ECOSTAR:

Adi Mishnayot, a BA student in Film and Television at the Tel Aviv University, is the Academic Affairs coordinator at the NUIS. The Department works to promote a higher education system which is accessible to all and of high quality. The department assists the students' unions in the academic field, representing the students to the various authorities, helping individual students with academic problems, and promoting pro-student legislation. The department addresses issue of quality teaching in Israel, along with an emphasis on academic research.



ASSAF AND ADI

Assaf Fahardian, a graduate student in political science at the Hebrew University and a BA in Middle Eastern Studies and Israel studies from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, was the fundraising and foreign relations coordinator at the NUIS for several years. Among other tasks, the department works to strengthen ties between students in Israel and students worldwide, and for the development of a dialogue between them. The department participates in the overall national effort of public diplomacy for Israel. Assaf has recently completed his term of office at the NUIS.

Meet Assaf's successor, **Chen Mozes**.




I am 26 years old, living in Tel Aviv, Israel. In the past, I interned at the Israeli Mission to the United Nations and worked at a public relations office. I have a B.A. in international relations and business management from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. I recently started working for NUIS as the Foreign Relations Coordinator. In addition, I am in the

process of starting an Alumni Network here in Israel, obviously under NUIS

Personal message from Assaf to ECOSTAR's partners:

"I want to bid farewell to you all and inform you that I am leaving my position at the National Union of Israeli Students (NUIS). I have enjoyed working for the NUIS and I appreciate having this wonderful opportunity to work with you all. Thank you for all the support, insights, and help you have provided me. Good luck and I wish you all the best in your endeavors!" My personal email is: fr.assaf@gmail.com

We wish Assaf every success in his future career and thank him for all his contributions to ECOSTAR.

"Keep your eyes on the stars, and your feet on the ground." 

Theodore Roosevelt

Preparation for 4th ECOSTAR Consortium meeting:

The 4th Consortium Meeting of the ECOSTAR project will take place at Maastricht University in the Netherlands on 7th and 8th September 2015. Registration forms have been sent to partners and should be returned to Pauline Govers; Pauline.Govers@maastrichtuniversity.nl before the end of July. Please ensure you have booked your rooms and that your travel plans are progressing. Detailed information and preparatory materials will shortly be available in the ECOSTAR website.

A little about Maastricht:

The name Maastricht is derived from Latin *Trajectum ad Mosam* (or *Mosae Trajectum*), meaning 'crossing at the Meuse', and referring to the bridge built by the Romans over the Maas River (also called the Meuse), which runs through the centre of the city. There is some debate as to whether Maastricht is the oldest city in the Netherlands. Some people consider Nijmegen the oldest, mainly because it was the first settlement in the Netherlands to receive Roman city rights. Maastricht never did, but it may be considerably older as a settlement. In addition, Maastricht can claim uninterrupted habitation since Roman times. A large number of archeological finds confirms this.

Maastricht did not escape the ravages of World War II. It was quickly taken by the Germans during the Battle of Maastricht in May 1940, but on 14 September 1944 it was also the first Dutch city to be liberated by allied forces. The three Maas bridges were destroyed or severely damaged during the war.



The latter half of the century saw the decline of traditional industries (such as the famous Maastricht potteries) and a shift to a service economy. Several European institutions have found their base in

Maastricht. In 1992, the Maastricht Treaty was negotiated and signed here, leading to the creation of the European Union and the Euro.

Large parts of the city centre have been thoroughly refurbished in recent years, including the area around the main railway station, the main shopping streets and the Maasboulevard promenade along the bank of the Meuse. Also, a new quarter, including the new Bonnefanten Museum, a public library, a theatre and several housing blocks designed by international architects, was built on the grounds of the former Céramique potteries near the town centre. As a result, Maastricht looks notably smarter. Further large-scale projects, such as the redevelopment of the old Sphinx factory and Belvédère area, are underway. (From Wikipedia). We shall be taking a short walking tour of the city centre one evening during the consortium.

Maastricht University, which was founded in 1976, is the most international university in the Netherlands. It stands out for its innovative approach to learning, which is based on the McMaster Problem Based Learning (PBL) approach, and its international outlook. With almost 16,000 students and 4,000 staff, UM offers a wide choice of academic programmes, all of which are designed to bring out the best in their students. The university is accommodated in many of the grand old buildings in the centre of the city as well as in a modern purpose built campus on the edge of town.



Challenging education

Maastricht University has used Problem-Based Learning (PBL) ever since it was founded and has been an expert in this field for over 35 years. PBL is more than just acquiring knowledge; it's about exchanging knowledge in a challenging and effective way. At bachelor level it necessarily involves students learning in small tutorial groups and holds students responsible for their own learning by reporting the results of their guided individual study back to the study group for mutual benefit. It is more than task based learning and requires the development of student knowledge by building step by step on previously gained knowledge.

Multidisciplinary research

Researchers at UM work in multidisciplinary teams and in close cooperation with international institutes, business and industry. Our high-quality researchers have attracted international attention by taking the lead in several large European research projects. However, we're not stopping there. Maastricht University's research portfolio continues to attract national and international top researchers. But we also believe in young talent. That's why UM integrates research into every level of our education.



European and international while maintaining ties to the region

UM can easily call itself the most international university in the Netherlands: almost 45% of our students and more than 30% of our teaching staff come from abroad. Almost all of our programmes are taught in English, and European and international themes are deeply rooted in research and education. That creates an international atmosphere that's attractive to Dutch as well as international students and employees. Though Maastricht University is internationally oriented, it maintains strong ties to the region. Initiatives such as the 'Kennis-As Limburg', the Transnational University Limburg, as well as the activities of various departments such as UM Holding and Studium Generale testify to this solidarity.

The Language Centre at Maastricht University:

At the Maastricht University Language Centre, we provide language training for highly educated professionals who work in an international, knowledge-intensive environment and also to commerce and business as well as the public sector in the region. This training, based on the latest insights in language education, helps our clients to communicate effectively. As befits a part of Maastricht University, the Language Centre stands for high quality and educational innovation. We offer a wide range of courses in modern languages as diverse as Chinese and Portuguese, with Dutch and English being the typical working languages. The Language Centre strives to be the partner of choice for recognized language training in the Limburg region.

(Information is from the UM website: <http://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/Home.htm>)

On a personal note:

*Congratulations to **Marissa Gross-Yarm** of the Israeli National ERASMUS+ office on the birth of her daughter.*

*Congratulations to **Victoria Robinson** on the award of her PhD from the University of Leicester.*

*We are sad to say goodbye to **Assaf Fahardian** of the NUIS who is moving on to new challenges. Thank you for all your contributions, Assaf and we wish you every success in your future.*

*Welcome to **Chen Mozes** who is replacing Assaf at the NUIS. We wish you the best of luck in your new position and look forward to working with you.*

*Our condolences to **Elana Spector-Cohen** on the passing of her mother.*



Dear ECOSTAR partners,

Thank you to all who contributed to the newsletter.

This is a reminder and request to please document your meetings with photos & summaries, and send in any articles, researches, news, references of interest, etc.

In best support,

Judy

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