



Tempus



English as the Cornerstone of Sustainable Technology and Research



December 2014

Issue 4



Season's Greetings and Warm Wishes for a Wonderful New Year!

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Dear Tempus ECOSTAR Partners,

As we now come to the end of our first year of ECOSTAR, I would like to express my personal appreciation for the opportunity to work with such a dedicated, talented and quite varied group of professionals. The coming together of partners from many places in Europe and Israel is fascinating, and has the potential of creating many bridges on many levels: colleges and universities; educators, researchers and experts in foreign language teaching and assessment, students, people who speak different languages, a mix of religious faiths, all dedicated to upgrading and improving the field of teaching and testing English studies in higher education.

We have just celebrated our holidays – Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights, and Christmas, celebrating the miracles of Christmas. I hope that this has afforded you with a pause from all the hard work, time to spend with family, friends and loved ones, and to 'recharge' towards the new year.

I wish you all a bright and fruitful year, and look forward, together, to coming closer to the goals we have set for ourselves, for the future of our students.

In best faith,

Judy

"Coming together is a beginning;
Keeping together is progress;
Working together is success."

Henry Ford

Erasmus+ Information Day in Israel "Changing Lives, Opening Minds"



CHIARA TIBERI & MARISSA GROSS INTRODUCING ERASMUS+

The Erasmus+ programme was formally launched in Israel on Monday 3rd November with a beautiful reception held in Tel Aviv in the presence of the EU Ambassador to Israel, Lars Faaborg-Andersen and representatives from many of the European embassies in Israel, as well as presidents of the universities and colleges and coordinators of European projects underway in Israel. Two representatives of the Tempus ECOSTAR project were there, Assaf Farhadian of the National Union of Israeli Students, and the ECOSTAR project coordinator, Dr. Linda Weinberg of Braude College of Engineering. The reception provided an opportunity to

network and to promote the project among the many participants, and the interest in our project was clearly genuine. In a brief conversation, Professor Manuel Trachtenberg, outgoing chairman of the Council of Higher Education's Budgeting and Financing Committee, expressed his hopes that we would achieve ECOSTAR's goals which he said are apt and timely, and shared his good wishes for the success of our project.

The Erasmus+ Information Day took place on Tuesday 4th November 2014 at the Van Lier Institute in Jerusalem, organized and run by the Erasmus+ Office Israel, Council for Higher Education (CHE) staff - Marissa Gross, Kathryn Theurillat, and Dina Gallero. Together with Chiara Tiberi, the Project Advisor EACEA, they presented the new Erasmus+ programme. The day provided a wonderful opportunity for members of the ECOSTAR team to promote the project and disseminate information about the project's aims and goals, and to meet with the people involved in other TEMPUS projects from Israel and Europe. Special thanks to Dr. Ruthy Fortus, Dr. Hanna Jubran and to Assaf Farhadian who kept the ECOSTAR information booth running throughout the day, and to Yshai Gabai and Anat Samuel – the talented graphic artist – for the beautiful roll-up promoting ECOSTAR, and the newly re-printed leaflet.



DR. LINDA WEINBERG, DR. HANNA JUBRAN AND DR. RUTHY FORTUS AT THE ECOSTAR STAND,

More information about Erasmus+ can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/index_en.htm. If you go to "Presentations" to "Erasmus+ in detail" you will find the most informative Power Point Presentation that was presented in the Information Day, and the exciting new plans for Erasmus+.

OER workshop at IUCC

Mr. Eli Shmueli invited ECOSTAR partners to a workshop at IUCC (Tel – Aviv University) on Open Educational Resources (OERs). The workshop was led by Professor Sorel Reisman, MERLOT Managing Director and Ms. Barbra Bied Sperling, MERLOT Manager of Software and Technical Development. MERLOT is an internationally known community of teachers and learners who use the digital library of 46,000+ free, peer-reviewed Open Education Resources (OER). MERLOT is connected to the Israeli meta-data repository MAOR which will store the metadata for the OERs that will be developed for the ECOSTAR project.

During the workshop, the participants were introduced to the concept of the ‘referatory’ – a meta-data repository - and learned more about the concept of ‘openness’ as used in open education.

Some of the terms explained included the following:

OS – open source: used to refer to software such as Moodle, Linux etc.

OA – Open Access: for articles and text books, sometimes time-dependent (resources are closed at publication but become open after a time period).

OER – Open Educational Resources: these are in the public domain or have open licenses indicating whether users can freely copy, use, adapt and re-share them. In some cases, materials producers and developers may choose to limit use and this can be done using Creative Commons licensing from which there are 6 possibilities to choose, depending on your willingness to share your materials. For more information on this kind of licensing, see this link: <http://creativecommons.org> .

This workshop helped to clarify the overall concept of the meta-data repository, where the open educational resources created by ECOSTAR will be stored.



ELI SHMUEL (IUCC), AVIGAIL KIRSCHENBAUM-NOY (IDC), MIRIAM SYMON (IDC), SUZIE ASHKENAZI (OBC), MONICA BROIDO (IDC/TAU). (ALSO PARTICIPATING: LINDA WEINBERG & JUDY PRESSMAN (OBC), INGRID BARTH (OUI), NOA KADMAN (IDC), DANIEL PORTMAN (IDC).

Progress from WP1 – Creating a National Framework for English Language Studies in Higher Education in Israel

Regarding the needs and situation analyses, the student and EAP teachers online surveys are up and running. Links to the surveys as well as a flyer about ECOSTAR have been sent to EAP department heads in universities, colleges and teachers colleges in Israel. Together with Linda (WP4), we are also finalizing an online survey for content instructors that consists of items related to EMI as well as the same collapsed "can do" statements from the CEFR to rank relative importance for the Israeli graduate as were included in the student and EAP teachers surveys. We are also working on the conceptualization of the national framework, and have made considerable progress on mapping out the document. Finally, in conjunction with MEITAL and Open University (WP3), we are working on the metadata that will be used to describe the OERs in the repository.

Elana Spector-Cohen, WP Leader, Tel Aviv University

Update from NITE

The months following the meeting in L'Aquila have been productive ones. Further to our intention of obtaining information about the relationship between the CEFR scale and the scale currently used for placement of EFL students into remedial English courses, and with the cooperation of the partner institutions, we have sent the following:



1. 200 AMIR tests (NITE placement tests) to the Wroclaw University of Environmental and Life Sciences
2. 100 AMIR tests to the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca
3. 500 TELC tests (levels A2-B1, B1-B2, B2-C1) to Ort Braude College of Engineering
4. 1160 TELC tests (levels A2-B1, B1-B2, B2-C1) to Tel Aviv University
5. 12 TELC tests (level A2-B1) to the Nazareth Academic Institute
6. 100 AMIR tests to the University of L'Aquila

For the spring semester we hope to send a large number of TELC tests to the Open University.

We have some initial results from the Israeli institutions (see the tables below), and by the next newsletter we will be able to send you our complete findings, including those of the European institutions, and with information on the relationship between CEFR and AMIR scales.

Those who took each dual-level test were given a score that was either one of the two levels, or the next lower level if they didn't reach a certain minimum.

For students taking the A2-B1 test:

Level	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
A1	7	8.54	7	8.54
A2	48	58.54	55	67.07
B1	27	32.93	82	100.00

For students taking the B1-B2 test:

Level	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
A2	38	10.24	38	10.24
B1	195	52.56	233	62.80
B2	138	37.20	371	100.00

For students taking the B2-C1 test:

Level	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
B1	192	35.42	192	35.42
B2	315	58.12	507	93.54
C1	35	6.46	542	100.00

Thanks again to all the institutions – and their teachers – who gave up precious teaching time to participate in the study.

Ruthy

Progress from Work Package 2 – Developing Learning Packages

After an unusual summer, the ECOSTAR team at IDC has settled back to work. We have continued to develop learning packages – now for the higher levels on the topics of innovation, ethics and globalization. Our major focus now needs to be in coordinating with the framework being developed in WP1 and the technological tools and interface of WP3 and WP5. We were glad to learn more about MERLOT at IUCC and hope that can provide the interface we need for our resources. We have been piloting materials this semester at IDC and successfully trying out different technological tools, including Kahoot, which was a recommendation from OUI, and can be used to easily develop quizzes for students to answer on their mobile phones. Once we have the framework, we hope to upload materials and receive input from our European and Israeli partners.

Wishing you all seasonal greetings and a happy and successful 2015!

The IDC ECOSTAR team - Miriam Symon, WP Leader

Progress from Work Package 4 – English Medium Instruction

Following on from the WP4 meeting at ULeic in the summer, where the outline for the model EMI course was finalised and the general structure of the course syllabus constructed, the last 4 months have been dedicated to the development of course content and the recruitment of field experts to deliver the lecture content. These lectures will be filmed at ULeic in the New Year. A total of 6 topics have been developed, in 3 week modules, with much of the material being external to contact time, using the flipped classroom model where tasks and assignments will be carried out during lesson time. The detailed course syllabus will be available shortly. The next phase for the WP4 team focuses on identifying and developing the language issues in the course modules. –

From Linda Weinberg, WP Leader, on behalf of the EMI Team

3rd ECOSTAR Consortium Meeting February 24-26, 2015

Hosted by The University of Nicosia, Cyprus.

General Schedule:

Tuesday February 24th: Arrival in Nicosia.

Meeting of the Steering Committee & Task Force in the afternoon, at the hotel; Social gathering and meal in the evening with all participants.

Wednesday February 25th: Day 1 of the consortium meeting (at UNic)
Social activity and meal in the evening with all participants

Thursday February 26th: Day 2 of the consortium meeting (at UNic)
Projected finishing time 17:00



MAP OF NICOSIA, CREATED IN 1597

Accommodations

Victoria Kalogerou has secured us a very good price at the new Altius Boutique Hotel, including complementary use of the hotel's conference room for our committee meetings.

Please be sure to make your booking directly with the hotel's reservations department as soon as possible. As we have taken into account one person per partner institution, if there will be more than one, it is especially important to secure your booking soon.

To remind you, the rates are: 60€ for a single room per night 75 € for double room per night.
This includes Wi-Fi in the rooms, breakfast and taxes.

For booking, contact the hotel directly by email: info@altiushotel.com, and be sure to quote "ECOSTAR" for the special rates. They are very prompt at responding and sending your booking information.

For more information about the hotel: www.altiushotel.com



It will be important to book your flights accordingly so that you can be there for the entire schedule, including Tuesday evening. The time is short, and we want to make the very best of this valuable face to face time. More details about the agenda and necessary preparations of material will be sent out.

Victoria will be sending out formal registration forms soon.

A Report from Rosalie

Dr. Rosalie Sitman from Tel Aviv University attended a Linguistic Tourism Conference in Buenos Aires in October, and reports to us:

The conference focused on Spanish as a commodity; i.e., teaching Spanish language and culture to students, tourists and professionals visiting or working in Spanish-speaking countries, particularly in Argentina, Chile and Brazil. The main topics discussed were teacher training, materials development, accreditation, placement issues in order to determine levels, and the CEFR vs local frameworks. Spanish as an emerging industry is on the rise, and Latin America can definitely be taken into consideration as a burgeoning market with plenty of opportunities.



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Dear ECOSTAR partners,

Thank you to all who contributed to the newsletter. This is a reminder to please document your meetings with photos, send in summaries, articles, researches, news, references of interest, etc. Thanks

In best support,

Judy

