



Tempus



English as the Cornerstone of Sustainable Technology and Research



October 2016

Issue 10



With warm wishes to all for a fruitful new academic year, and Shanna Tova to our Israeli partners.

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From the Coordinator

Dear partners and colleagues,

As I write these words to open the latest newsletter, my thoughts are with our dear friends and colleagues in Italy who have yet again been subjected to terrifying earthquakes. Our thoughts and prayers are with them for their safety.

Our project is entering its final phase, and as you will read in the coming pages, a great deal of activity has been taking place. Following a very successful consortium meeting hosted, beautifully by our colleagues at TUC-N in Romania, we all returned home energized and with clear decisions on the steps required to implement the piloting stage of the project. Collaboration between partners on compiling ECOSTAR handbooks are making good progress, as is planning for the major dissemination event which will take place in January at Tel Aviv University following the final consortium meeting at OBC.

Taking a step back and reviewing what has been achieved to date, I believe that the ECOSTAR partners can be truly proud. We can already see ECOSTAR's deliverables being implemented and with the Professional Development Program ready to roll, many more teachers and institutions will become involved. The revamped website and the resources it offers to the community are testament to the tremendous hard work that has been taking place. Thank you to everyone who has contributed their time and efforts so willingly and congratulations on all your achievements.

I wish everyone a pleasant and successful year and look forward to seeing you all in January.

Linda





6th and Final ECOSTAR consortium meeting and Symposium on Internationalization and the English Language in Higher Education

In contrast to previous consortium meetings, which have revolved around planning and preparation activities, our final meeting will have as its focus, a major dissemination event where the project’s deliverables will be presented to our main target audiences. This event will be a national symposium, held at Tel Aviv University on Thursday 5th January, 2017, where the ECOSTAR Framework for English in Higher Education in Israel will be presented to the Council of Higher Education, and a panel discussion on the challenges of internationalization for English language programs. In the afternoon, there will be a face-to-face session for current and future participants in the Professional Development Program. (see “Save the date” program that is being sent out).

The consortium will meet at OBC from the afternoon of the 3rd through the 4th of January to wrap up project activities. Partners will then travel to Tel Aviv in preparation for the symposium. More details are on the way.



Co-funded by the
Tempus Programme
of the European Union

ECOSTAR

Towards Internationalization:
A CEFR-Aligned Framework for English in Higher Education in Israel

5th January 2015
10.00—16.00
Tel Aviv University

The TEMPUS ECOSTAR project (December 2013 – March 2017) provides tools for modernizing and standardizing English language teaching in higher education in Israel in line with the Council for Higher Education’s plans for internationalization. Over a period of three years, the ECOSTAR project team has developed a framework for tertiary level English aligned with the internationally-recognized Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), language learning resources and teacher training modules, as well as assets to support students and teachers for English Medium Instruction (EMI).

You are cordially invited to join us for a symposium on internationalization and the English language in higher education, where we will formally present the CEFR-Aligned Framework for English in Higher Education in Israel, followed by a panel discussion with representatives from the CHE, H-INET, ECOSTAR and NITE.

Please register here: <https://tempus-ecostar.iucc.ac.il/registration/>



Co-funded by the
Tempus Programme
of the European Union

ECOSTAR

Program

- 09.30—10.00 Registration
- 10.00—10.10 Welcoming remarks
- 10.10—10.20 The ECOSTAR project
- 10.20—11.00 Presentation of the CEFR-Aligned Framework for English in Higher Education in Israel
- 11.00—12.00 **PANEL SESSION:** How will English language programs in higher education address the challenges of internationalization and the need for internationally accepted standards?
- 12.00—12.10 *Coffee Break*
- 12.10—12.45 Implementation of the framework
- 12.45—13.30 Assessment and Professional Development
- 13.30—14.00 *Lunch Break*
- 14.00—16.00 Professional Development Session



5th Consortium meeting hosted at the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, 28th-29th June, 2016



THE BANNER ANNOUNCING THE 5TH
CONSORTIUM MEETINGS IN TUC-N'S
ENTRANCE

The ECOSTAR consortium partners gathered at the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca (TUC) for a two-day meeting in the heart of Transylvania. The opening was held in the University's auditorium, Aula Domsa, where the guests were welcomed by Professor Dan Mândru, PhD, Vice-rector for International Relations and Professor Vasile Dădârlat, Director of European Cooperation Programmes, who spoke about the importance of international cooperation in higher education and of the ECOSTAR project in this context.

In the presence of all consortium partners and the members of the Department of Modern Languages and Communication of TUC, Dr. Linda Weinberg gave a brief summary of the project's activities

since the 4th consortium meeting held in Maastricht in September 2015, and outlined the aims and objectives for the 5th consortium meeting. She emphasized the need for clear goals, clear timescales and clear responsibilities in order to complete all of the deliverables as required and within the project's deadlines. During the main sessions of the meeting, partners reported progress and planned for further activities in each work package.



WELCOME FROM OUR HOSTS

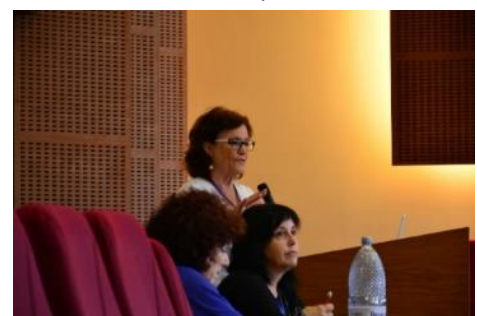
Elana Spector-Cohen, Lisa Amdur and Ruthy Fortus presented updates on the deliverables within WP1. They

presented for the first time the results of the EMI survey, which reached 2000 students, 88% of whom were undergraduates. An important component of WP1 is the Professional Development Program (PDP), meant to assist teachers in learning about the CEFR and how to implement the new framework in their teaching. The partners pointed out the need to get the PDP recognized by the Council of Higher

Education and the need to issue a certificate of completion, so that it can become, in the future, a component of teachers' annual evaluation. The approval of H-INET for this training is also necessary, so that 'graduates' can become H-INET –approved trainers.



ELANA SPECTOR-COHEN (TAU)



LISA AMDOR WITH ELANA SPECTOR-COHEN (TAU) AND
RUTHY FORTUS (NITE)

The status and progress of the learning packages in WP2 were presented by Miriam Symon and Daniel Portman. The piloted LPs should be completed no later than mid-December, therefore volunteers who will pilot them have been supplied with teachers' guidelines. Further additions to the LOs are under development and will also be completed by mid-December.



MIRIAM SYMON & DANIEL PORTMAN (IDC)

Ingrid Barth, Shaya Kass and Keren Berkovitz presented progress of deliverables in WP3 and WP5. The mobile application is the most important development since the previous meeting. It is currently being piloted with students and, following results and feedback, modifications and final touches will be carried out upon return from Cluj.

Keren talked to the partners about the new website and its functions, explained how the ECOSTAR materials are stored and displayed, and the additional work that still needs to be done in order to have the site ready for visitors. The ECOSTAR Moodle site will continue to host the PDP and the EMI course and project management documents. Partners were asked to explore the new site in depth, make comments and suggestions for improvement. A suggestion was made that the professional resources for instructors' zone should include, for instance, links to the CEFR downloadable version, articles that are not part of the PDP, conferences, professional associations and other additional resources. The idea of an EFL community of practice sharing resources surfaced as an important outcome of participation in the PDP and exposure to the framework and to the LPs in the repository and to the concept of OERs. A template form for the contribution of such materials in the ECOSTAR Moodle site and, perhaps, a forum for such a community of practice, could encourage other EFL teachers to participate in ECOSTAR.

Linda Weinberg provided updates on the Sustainable Futures EMI course (WP4), discussing the two pilots of this course that have taken place at OBC and findings from the experience. Transcripts to accompany the videos are being made, together with glossaries in each unit, while the next step of turning the course into a digital book will allow both showcasing as a standalone option, with a link to the downloadable and importable Moodle version, and use with English teachers and lecturers for training in EMI.

David Harper presented the Virtual Field Course, following on from the work that he and his development team had completed since Maastricht. Ideas and options on language activities for exploiting the resource were put together with Julie Arbel and TUC-N teachers on the first day of the consortium meeting, in a parallel session aimed at the transition from content to language teaching. In order to get this resource ready for piloting in the winter semester, the next steps include integrating elements of the VFC into the EMI sustainable futures course as well as exploiting the VFC as a language teaching resource.



PRESENTING THE WEBSITE FOR THE VIRTUAL FIELD COURSE

The consortium partners turned their attention to dissemination and sustainability of all results and achievements of the ECOSTAR project. A project booklet will describe the journey from an idea to a major cooperation project, while a handbook about the framework and its implementation, a students' handbook for the framework, a handbook for EMI, a repository guide, and a workbook for B1 level will also be produced.

In the session on the management of the project, Linda Weinberg explained about the project's extension through the end of March 2017 and how this period is intended for implementation of the project's deliverables: piloting the framework, the professional development programme, the learning packages, the

repository and mobile app and the EMI programme. She pointed out that this period is also crucial for dissemination activities that need to be stepped up.

The troubleshooting session closed with discussions on content and management of project activities. Planning ahead, the partners decided that the final consortium, in addition to being the last time when all of the partners will meet together at the same time face-to-face, will be combined with an event at which there will be a formal presentation of the ECOSTAR framework to the necessary target audience, including the representatives of the Council for Higher Education in Israel, heads of departments and other people who can influence the implementation of the framework and contribute to its sustainability.

The social programme of the 5th consortium meeting included a guided tour of the city centre. The hosts, Sonia Munteanu and Sanda Paduretu, walked the guests through the winding streets of the old city, around the medieval Piata Unirii and its architectural beauties. An emotional account of a more recent episode in Romanian history, the anti-communist revolution in 1989, was given by Sonia on the very place where young revolutionaries gave their lives for freedom and democracy. The partners visited the oldest and biggest university in Transylvania, the Babes-Bolyai University, a standing proof of multicultural and multiethnic academic excellence.



Staff Presentation to Teachers at Technical University Cluj-Napoca

As a parallel session during the 5th Consortium at Cluj-Napoca, Clive Lawrence from Maastricht University in the Netherlands, was invited to deliver a short presentation on the correlation between Cambridge Mainsuite levels, IELTS assessment scores and the CEFR. He also covered the criteria he uses for the assessment of



student verbal presentations. The presentation, which was delivered in Clive's usual style, complete with his customary bow-tie, generated considerable questions and discussion.

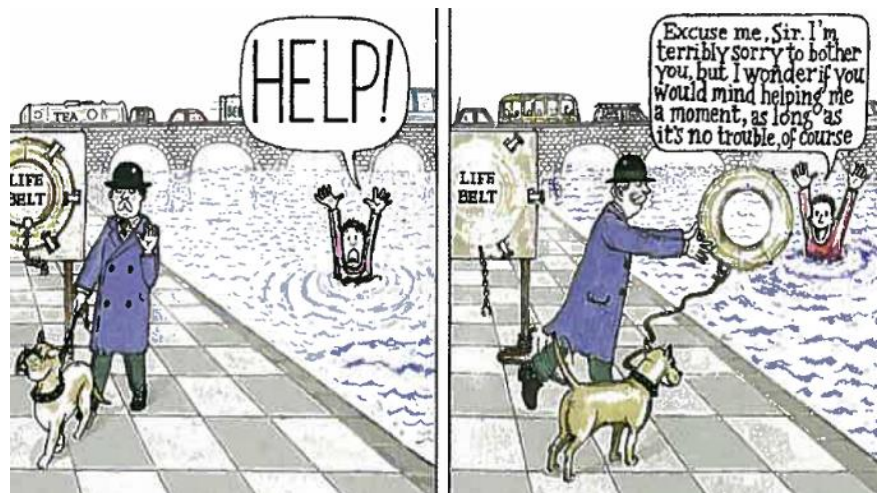
The first part of the presentation was a much abbreviated version of the CEFR standardisation workshop that he delivered in venues in Israel in 2015. He compared the IELTS assessment criteria with the Cambridge Mainsuite marking scales and linked both of these to the CEFR.

There was general agreement that in an ideal world, students would have a level of B2 on the CEFR in order to effectively study in English and it would be a realistic goal to ask for C1 as the exit level from a bachelor course and certainly as the entry level to a Master course delivered in English.

It was interesting to note that the guidelines for advanced presentation skills were much along the lines used by the University at Cluj-Napoca. Clive, who has coached speakers for TED Talks, stressed the need for any presentation to begin with a powerful, audience related opening. The traditional “Good morning, my name is And I am going to tell you something about” is to be avoided at all costs, whether a general presentation or a PhD defense.

In the main body of the talk, items should be grouped in threes. Audiences like threes, and it ensures that the speaker keeps to the point and resists the temptation to try to present everything they know on the topic. Lastly, (keeping this short summary to three points), he highlighted the need to maintain constant eye contact with the audience throughout the talk.

In essence, choosing the appropriate language is all about being British. The presentation was well received and certainly gave a good insight into English Language level assessment within the European education system.



CEFR Standardisation Workshops 12-13 September 2016 OBC and IDC

On 12 and 13 September Clive Lawrence delivered a standardisation workshop at Braude College and another at IDC. The trip started off in style with a supper party hosted by Linda in Karmiel, attended by many of the local English teachers. Although there was no element of competition involved, the dessert prepared by Keren Berkovitz was the highlight of the evening!

The goal of the workshop was to “calibrate” Israeli English teachers with to CEFR using the IELTS assessment scales as the point of reference. A small but engaged and dedicated group attended the workshop in each location. We refreshed those participating with the CEFR criteria and their relationship with the IELTS assessment scale and worked through some authentic writing samples by students at the respective institutions. It was interesting to note that within the group at each location there was considerable disparity in the variation in assessment. At Braude College the variation between individual teachers was markedly wider than that among the IDC teachers. The student samples were assessed against the local assessment system and then transferred across to the IELTS assessment scales and thus to a CEFR equivalent.

Assessment equivalents

It was notable that at IDC and TAU, the local assessment scales are shifted according to the desired level of the student. It appears that students score consistently as they go up through the years as the assessment “goal posts” move according to their experience level. Thus students might reasonably expect to score 75% or 80% in the first year, second year and the third year. Whilst this is not common practice in HE in Europe, application of the local assessment criteria was shown to relate consistently to an appropriate IELTS score; first year students scoring either side of 4, second year around 5 and third year about 6. This showed that the local assessment scale does have a consistent and accurate IELTS equivalent. The reason that the IELTS assessment scales were chosen as the bridge between the local assessment system and the CEFR was that the former offers a range of easily assimilated and applicable can-do statements from absolute beginner to near-native speaker level, all in one scale.

CEF Level	Cambridge ESOL	IELTS	TOEFL	TOEIC
C2				
C1	Advanced	6.5 - 7.5	550 - 587	700- 800
B2	First Cert	5 - 6	513 - 547	600- 700
B1		4.5	477- 510	500- 600

The workshops served to highlight the validity of retaining the local assessment criteria and subsequently relating the score across to the IELTS criteria and thus the CEFR.

“This was my 4th visit to Israel and, on the morning of departure, for the first time I had time to walk along Tel Aviv beach, so the trip was successful on all fronts!”

EMI Workshop (WP4) – OBC, 22nd September 2016

A Professional Development Workshop for English Medium Instruction was held at Braude College of Engineering on 22nd September. The workshop was well attended with participants from a variety of Israeli institutions from the north, south and center of the country, as well as from Romania and the UK. Amit Marantz-Gal, an active member of the TEMPUS EFA, IRIS and IN2IT projects from Sapir Academic College, began the day by discussing internationalisation in higher education, including internationalisation of the curriculum and the changing role of the English teacher in the context of internationalisation. This was very positively received and sparked a lot of discussion and debate amongst all participants.



AMIT MARANTZ GAL (SAPIR ACADEMIC COLLEGE)

Linda Weinberg (OBC) gave a short introduction to the challenges and opportunities of content and language integration after which Victoria Robinson of the University of Leicester presented the Sustainable Futures EMI Course. The course interested the participants greatly, with its ease of use, relevance and adaptability.



JULIE ARBEL (OBC), VICTORIA ROBINSON (ULEIC), AMIT MARANTZ GAL (SAPIR)

The course is currently being transferred to interactive pdf form (flipbook) to make it more attractive and user-friendly, but it will still be available to download and import from Moodle.

After lunch, Linda Weinberg presented feedback from piloting the Sustainable Futures course, following which, in small groups, the participants discussed practicalities associated with the adaptation of content courses for teaching in English, the preparation of content teachers for teaching in English, and of course the issue of assessment.

Sanda Paderetu of TUC-N summed up the day, and the participants all agreed that future meetings must be held and that the establishment of a SIG on the H-INET platform will help promote the development of a community of practice for EMI in Israel. Future workshops are in the pipeline.



SONIA MUNTEANU (TUC-N) & ROMAN MICHAELAN (SCE)

Work Package Updates:

WP 1

During the summer months, we participated in various meetings concerning English in Higher Education in Israel. We took every opportunity to stress the need for the adoption of international standards that are aligned with the CEFR and to disseminate the National Framework for English in Higher Education in Israel as well as the Hebrew version of the CEFR to major stakeholders, including the Council for Higher Education (CHE) and members of H-INET (the umbrella organization of English teachers in colleges, teachers' colleges and universities in Israel).

In addition, in compliance with the directives of the CHE, we are now finalizing the can-do statements for the pre-academic levels (approximately A1/A2) of English to be included in our National Framework. In this way, all levels of our National Framework will be aligned with the CEFR.

Finally, we have completed our modules for ECOSTAR's online Professional Development Program. This program will be presented to all the Heads of English Departments in institutions of higher learning in Israel in the hope that they will in turn train their own teachers to adopt and implement the Framework.

Of particular interest is the successful implementation of the Framework in two pilot courses for Mitkadmim Aleph (B1) taught by Lisa Amdur and Elana Spector-Cohen.

The Professional Development Program (PDP) for the implementation of the CEFR-aligned Framework for English in Higher Education in Israel was presented at the study day held at Tel Aviv University for staff of the Language Division in preparation for the new academic year (2016-2017). The English teachers will be participating in the PDP during the first semester and the presentation was designed to provide them with an introduction to the program, mainly with the intention of arousing their interest and enhancing their willingness to engage in this professional development. The presentation included a short description of the CEFR-aligned Framework for English in Higher Education with a focus on current trends in EFL and EAP across the globe and the needs of institutions of higher education to align with these trends.

The presentation included a focus on the types of activities included in the program, for example, discussion forums devoted to reflection on current practice and future directions. Emphasis was placed on the unique characteristics of the course – asynchronous online delivery, activities and assignments that not only serve as requirements of course participation but also provide participants with opportunities to use the products of the course in their classroom, sharing of materials to enrich the repertoires of all members of staff, and the provision of extensive resources for those wishing to delve deeper into the topics and issues presented in the program. Following the presentation staff could ask pertinent questions. It appears that the English teachers are not only interested in learning more about the CEFR-aligned Framework for English in Higher Education in Israel, but are appreciative of the chance to receive help and support as they take the initial steps to actual implementation. As this will be the first delivery of the PDP the teachers agreed to provide the developers with feedback that may be helpful in streamlining and contextualizing the course.

WP 2

After the long process of material development, in WP2 we have been busy finalizing all the exemplar units and activities: making sure all the materials are in order, that everything is unified and easy to follow, and everything is accessible in the website. The website too has needed editing and additions. This is a painstaking process, but we feel confident everything will be ready to be presented in the PDP.

We have also been engaged with the piloting stage of our exemplars. During last year, some of our Besisi/A2 teachers piloted some units, and during our pre-session summer course, we piloted some Advanced 1/B1 units. We have also asked teachers and students for feedback on the different activities and we would like to take this opportunity to encourage those of you who have not yet shared with us to do so. We hope that as an outcome of the PDP, not only will more teachers use our activities, but that we will also get more feedback and contributions.

Another issue that kept us on our toes this summer was preparing Unit 3 of the PDP. This included creating activities and screencasts to guide future participants to familiarize themselves with the materials we have created, the website in which they can be found, and some of the technologies we used to create them. This should lead the way for teachers to not only use WP2's exemplars, but also to create their own materials in the spirit of the CEFR-based Framework.

Focus on a partner: IUCC - Meital Work Package 5

IUCC - INTER UNIVERSITY COMPUTATION CENTER (R.C.)
IUCEL - INTER UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR E-LEARNING



מרכז החישובים הבינאוניברסיטאי (ע.ר.)
- מרכז ידע בין-מוסדי לסיוע בטכנולוגיות למידה -

MEITAL, the Inter-University Center for E-Learning (IUCEL), is one of the Israeli Inter-University Computation Center's (IUCC) independent operating units. MEITAL is the leading Israeli e-learning center, which assists HEIs both pedagogically and technologically in utilizing new learning technologies. MEITAL is a consortium of Israel's eight universities and some twenty colleges, which offers members a variety of technologies at consortium prices.

MEITAL focuses on the creation and maintenance of inter-institutional teams of experts. These teams evaluate new technologies, as well as deal with copyright issues, online course development, Learning Management Systems (LMS), and more. They map and define e-learning in Israeli higher education.

Additionally, MEITAL maintains a repository of e-learning resources and publishes an e-learning newsletter recommending Open-Access resources to professionals. MEITAL organizes a national conference, now in its 13th year (where this year ECOSTAR partners gave a presentation to an audience which included members of the Council for Higher Education), as well as seminars and workshops.

MEITAL specializes in advancing the utilization of Open Educational Resources (OER) in Israel and the European Union. On the national level, MEITAL has established the MAOR project (Meta-data And Object Repository), a freely available repository for lecturers and students in higher education. MAOR enables sharing, use and reuse of OER.

On the EU level, MEITAL has developed with colleagues in the GÉANT Association (formerly TERENA) the pan-European repository for meta-data of learning resources, eduOER. The project aggregates metadata of OER from institutional and national repositories in a European-wide federated referatory (meta-data repository). This aggregation of international and local resources contributes to the variety of available learning recourses, reduces development costs, and assists in promoting other collaborations among the institutions.

MEITAL is also a part of the PRACE (Partnership for Advanced Computing in Europe) online training project, which includes the production of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and CodeVault, an open platform containing various high performance computing code samples.

MEITAL intends to continue promoting e-learning technologies in general and OER in particular, in order to facilitate access to high-quality education in Israel and the European Union.

For the past three years, MEITAL has played a key role in the EU-funded Tempus ECOSTAR project. This role includes providing the project's technological infrastructure which consists of a Moodle Learning Management System and a WordPress archive.

Within ECOSTAR, MEITAL has worked with **Work Package 3's** leader, Dr. Ingrid Barth and the Open University ECOSTAR team to develop a new mobile application as well as a new website for the Roads for Academic Reading vocabulary project. The new mobile app incorporates gamification and a social element to enhance English vocabulary learning: Games that support acquisition of English academic vocabulary can be played either individually or competitively in tournaments against others. The mobile app works with the new Roads website which will provide unique text-profiling software that identifies and translates into Hebrew or Arabic the CEFR and other high-frequency words that appear in users' digital texts. Both the mobile app and the Roads website will help students learn the English vocabulary they need to succeed in their academic studies as well as in the 21st century globalized workplace.



Personal News

Congratulations to:

Miriam Symon on the forthcoming marriage of her son

Condolences to:

Elana Spector-Cohen on the loss of her father

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