



Tempus



English as the Cornerstone of Sustainable Technology and Research



June 2016

Issue 9



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From the Coordinator

Since our last meeting in Maastricht, in September 2015, the ECOSTAR project has continued to stride forward towards achieving its objectives, despite various challenges that the project has faced. Meetings with members of the Israeli Council for Higher Education have taken place and a pathway for dialogue regarding developments for English language studies has been initiated. Planning for contributions to an international conference literally took off on the journey back home from the Netherlands and culminated in a very successful event, which took place in February 2016 at Tel Aviv University, with over a hundred domestic and international participants. Following up on the workshops held in Israel last year, draft assessment rubrics have been created and piloted, and EMI seminars based on the introductory workshops held in Poland last summer will be taking place soon. The *Sustainable Futures* EMI course is reaching the end of its second pilot, and findings will be discussed at the upcoming partners' meeting.

With our newly-granted extension, the project will now officially end on March 31st, 2016. Please prepare your diaries for decisions regarding the final consortium meeting in January 2017.

Looking forward to seeing you in Cluj.

Linda





Report on the first International H-INET Spring Conference



H-INET is the new professional association for English language teachers in higher education in Israel. It was founded in August 2015, bringing together under one roof, the three former associations, UTELI, FACET and the EAP Forum, which represented separately the EAP teachers in the universities, the academic colleges and the academic teacher training colleges. Amongst the aims of H-INET is the holding of an annual professional conference, the first of which took place on the 8th and 9th of February 2016 at Tel Aviv University. We were very pleased to see amongst the audience

Dr. Rosalie Sitman, head of the Division of Foreign Language at Tel Aviv University, opened the conference with an emotional speech about the significance of languages and the need for ever-greater proficiency in English for students, graduates and lecturers in Israel. She introduced the keynote speaker, Professor Barry O'Sullivan, who demonstrated considerable familiarity with the current situation in Israel in his highly relevant and enjoyable lecture.

Over the course of the two days, 150 people from Israel, Canada, Poland, Italy, Romania and the Netherlands attended, making it a truly international event. In the audience on the first day we were pleased to see visitors from the quality assurance committee of the Israeli Council of Higher Education and the ERASMUS+ officers from Jerusalem.

ECOSTAR's partners were well-represented. Professor Ofra Inbar of Tel Aviv University talked about current trends and future directions for English in higher education; Lisa Amdur, Iair Or and Elana Spector Cohen, also of Tel Aviv University, presented the ECOSTAR framework for EAP in the Israeli higher education framework; Sonia Munteanu of the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Ewa Hajdasz of Wroclaw University of Environmental and Life Sciences, and Fatima Carla Bassi of the University of L'Aquila, discussed the European experience in implementing the CEFR; Daniel Portman and Miriam Symon of the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya, together with Ingrid Barth and Shaya Kass of the Open University of Israel, shared with the audience some of the learning packages and open educational resources which support the ECOSTAR framework for English in higher education in Israel; Ruth Fortus of the National Institute for Testing and Evaluation, Jerusalem, and Clive Lawrence of the University of Maastricht in the Netherlands, conducted a workshop on assessment; and Linda Weinberg of the ORT Braude College of Engineering presented the ECOSTAR project to the audience and talked of ways in which teachers and institutions outside the project's consortium can become involved and can participate in ECOSTAR activities.

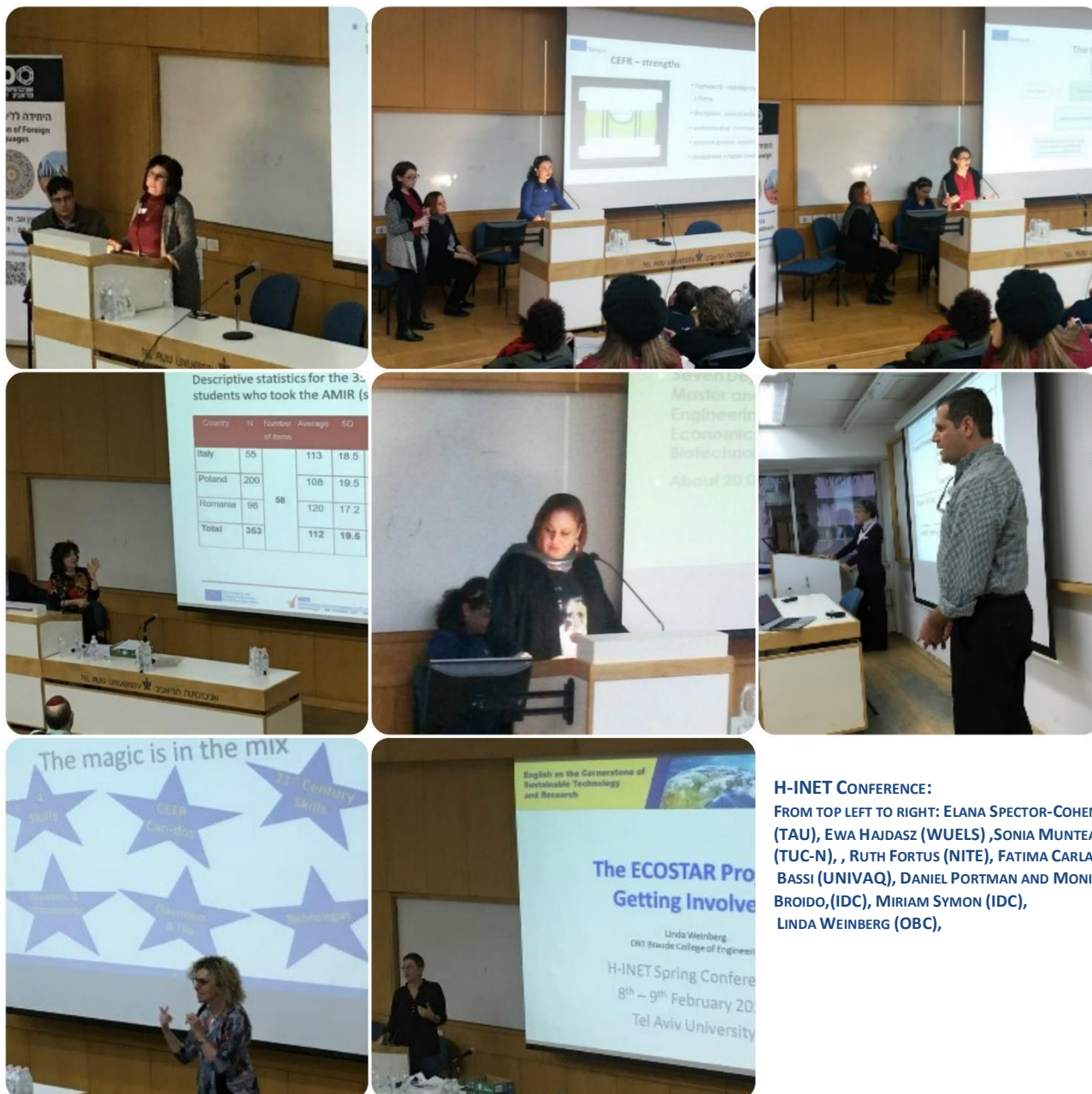
In the parallel papers session, twelve presentations by EFL and EAP teachers covered diverse issues within the field, including mindfulness, project-based learning, gamifying professional development, genre assessment, critical thinking skills, support for Bedouin students, translanguaging and more.

The conference ended with a panel discussion summing up current trends and future directions, and how the profession can contend with recent initiatives from the Israeli Council for Higher Education. It became clear over the two days of the project, that the localized CEFR that has been created within



the ECOSTAR project provides a clear road map for the development of English language studies in higher education in Israel and that the time is ripe for its implementation.

This was a most enjoyable and successful conference, bringing together teachers of English in higher education from all over Israel as well as from five foreign countries. Plans are already underway for the next H-INET conference. Please see the H-INET website: <http://h-inet.org/>



H-INET CONFERENCE:

FROM TOP LEFT TO RIGHT: ELANA SPECTOR-COHEN (TAU), EWA HAJDASZ (WUELS), SONIA MUNTEANU (TUC-N), , RUTH FORTUS (NITE), FATIMA CARLA BASSI (UNIVAQ), DANIEL PORTMAN AND MONICA BROIDO, (IDC), MIRIAM SYMON (IDC), LINDA WEINBERG (OBC),



Focus on a partner TUC-N The Technical University of Cluj-Napoca

Background

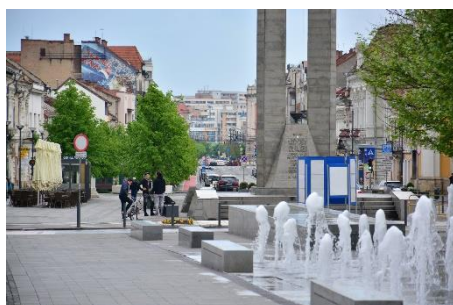
The 5th consortium meeting of the ECOSTAR project will be hosted by the Romanian partner, The Technical University of Cluj-Napoca (TUC). The staff involved belong to the Department of Modern Languages and Communication (DMLC) and are: Sonia Munteanu (sonia_munteanu@yahoo.co.uk or Sonia.Munteanu@lang.utcluj.ro) and Sanda Paduretu (sandapaduretu@yahoo.com or Sanda.Paduretu@lang.utcluj.ro).



The Technical University is one of the most important HEIs in Romania and holds over 200 inter-university agreements with partners all over the world. Based in Cluj-Napoca, it has 13 faculties in five locations in Transylvania offering Bachelor, Master and Ph.D. programmes in Romanian, English and German.

About the 5th Consortium Venue

Cluj-Napoca (*Cluj* < lat. *clus castrum*, *clus*=enclosed) is the heart of Transylvania (literally, if you look at the map, as well as symbolically) and traces its origins back to the 2nd century A.D. Roman settlement, *Napoca*, which, in 124 A.D., received the rank of "municipium". The city quickly advanced socially and economically and during Marcus Aurelius' reign *Napoca* received the title "colonia", the



BULEVARDUL EROILOR IS THE EAST-WEST CENTRAL AXIS OF THE CITY, BUSTLING WITH CAFES, RESTAURANTS AND PEOPLE... WE'LL BE WALKING UP AND DOWN THAT STREET EVERY DAY WHEN YOU COME HERE

highest possible urban status in the Roman Empire. The remains of the ancient Roman settlement can still be seen in the central square, Unirii/Union Square. The city is also known under its German name, *Klausenburg*, and Hungarian name, *Kolosvar*. It has been a multiethnic (Romanians, Hungarians, Germans, Saxons, Jews, Gypsies being just some of the ethnic groups) and multicultural city for centuries, treasuring and promoting its unique social and cultural profile. Some Dracula traces included here....

There are six public universities in Cluj-Napoca and several

other private universities, making it the city with the largest student population in Romania. This was one of the reasons for which Cluj-Napoca was chosen as *European Youth Capital* in 2015. A walk in the city centre can give a flavour of the beautiful architectural diversity the city has managed to preserve in spite of the violent attack on its monuments in the communist era. A very crowded city with difficult traffic, it compensates with green areas such as the Central Park and a spectacular Botanical Garden, both worth visiting to recharge batteries (the Central Park is 1-minute walk from the TUC building).



THE 'BABES-BOLYAI' UNIVERSITY IS IN KOGALNICEANU STREET; IT IS THE LARGEST AND OLDEST UNIVERSITY IN ROMANIA, WITH THE LONGEST MULTICULTURAL TRADITION;



5th Consortium Meeting at TUC-N , Cluj-Napoca, Romania

The meetings will take place in one of the university's buildings (Faculty of Civil Engineering) in the city centre, where the Department of Modern Languages and Communication has two seminar rooms. The address is 25 George Baritiu Street. The official opening and most of the meetings will take place in the auditorium Aula Domsa which is the University Senate's meeting room.



PIATA MUZEULUI ("MUSEUM SQUARE") BY NIGHT

Money can be exchanged in the airport; the Romanian currency is called *Leu/Lei* (pl.), abbreviated as RON (very counter-intuitively!).

From/to the airport we recommend taking a taxi. All companies (only take the ones with the sign TAXI, never board cars without specific signs!) have more or less the same fare/km, day and night fares applicable. It should be around 20 Lei. Ask for the receipt in advance.

Weather



Romania is having a heat spell at the moment. Temperatures may be a bit cooler when we arrive, with forecasted highs of 26-29 C° during the day, 17 C° at night with possible thunderstorms Wednesday. Please check the forecast closer to departure.



THE ANCIENT CAPITAL OF DACIA POROLISSENSIS, CLUJ –NAPOCA WAS RECORDED FOR THE FIRST TIME BY THE GREEK GEOGRAPHER CLAUDIUS PTOLEMY (AD 85 – 165) SOME TWO THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO. IT WAS ELEVATED TO MUNICIPALITY DURING THE REIGN OF THE EMPEROR HADRIAN (AD 117-138)) UNDER THE NAME OF MUNICIPIUM AELIUM HADRIANUM NAPOCA AND LATER TO COLONY, AROUND AD 180 UNDER MARCUS AURELIUS OR UNDER COMMODUS.



ECOSTAR 5th Consortium Meeting

Hosted by TUC-N, The Technical University of Cluj-Napoca

June 27-28th 2016

Day 1 – Tuesday 28th June

8:30	Met by our hosts at hotel, walk to TUC-N together
09.00 – 09.15 Aula Domsa	Registration at TUC-N
09.15 – 09.30	Welcome remarks (TUC-M): Sonia Munteanu, Prof. Vasile Dădârlat, PhD, Director of European and International Cooperation Programmes
09.30 – 09.40	Aims and objectives of the 5 th consortium meeting – Linda Weinberg (OBC)
9:40-11:40	WP1 – National Framework for English in higher education (TAU) Elana Spector-Cohen
11:40 -11:55	<i>Coffee Break</i>
12:00 – 13:30	WP 2 Learning Packages Miriam Symon (IDC)
13.30-14:45	<i>Lunch</i>
14:45 – 17:00	WP 7 & 8 Dissemination and Sustainability working session Publications – Books and handbooks
17:00 – 17:30	Summing up day 1 – Linda Weinberg (OBC)
17:30 – 18:30	<i>Walk in city centre or guided tour</i>
19.00	<i>Dinner at Bricks Restaurant</i>
Parallel to Day 1 Sessions – Room 467 (next to Aula Domsa)	Virtual Field Course – Work with David Harper & Victoria Robinson (ULeic), Julie Arbel (OBC) and TUC-N teachers; on adapting VFC to project needs



ECOSTAR 5th Consortium Meeting

Day 2 – Wednesday 29th June

09.00 – 09.05	Review of day 1, and goals for day 2 Linda Weinberg
09.05 – 10:00	WPs 3 and 5 OER's and Mobile Apps , Repository, Website Ingrid Barth (OUI) Eli Shmueli (IUCG)
10:00- 11:30	WP 4 – Updates on EMI course pilots, VFC, and EMI seminars Linda Weinberg (OBC)
11:30 -11:45	<i>Coffee Break</i>
11:45 – 13:15	Management session – updates, overview, forecasts – Linda Weinberg, Judy Pressman (OBC)
13:15- 14.30 Room 467-	<i>Lunch</i>
14:30 – 16:00	Troubleshooting Session
16:00 – 16:15	<i>Break</i>
16:15 17:30	Review and consolidation of WP decisions and plans of action
19.00	<i>Dinner at Baracca Restaurant</i>



Work Package Updates:

WP1: Professional Development program

The Professional Development Program (PDP), which will equip English teachers with the tools for implementing the new Israeli framework, has been taking shape. The program comprises 5 online units covering the theoretical background and an introduction to the CEFR; familiarizing teachers with the new Israeli framework; syllabus design and instructional planning; assessment in general and more specifically in the context of higher education; and testing options for learning outcomes for all four language skills. The launch of the PDP is scheduled for the end of October 2016, with the participation of English department heads. Responsibility for ongoing professional development will eventually devolve to the English departments in their respective HEIs.

WP 3: Mobile App.

We are now starting to pilot the mobile app for vocabulary instruction of CEFR words that are also high-frequency academic words. The main purpose of the pilot is to get as much feedback as possible from teachers and students in order to can improve the app before its public launch which is scheduled for end of June 2016.

WP 4: English Medium Instruction - ECOSTAR VIRTUAL FIELD COURSE



Prof David Harper, now Professor Emeritus of ULeic will be joining us in Cluj-Napoca, where there will be continued collaboration with OBC's EAP teachers to further develop the Teachers Guide to students, together with assistance from teachers from TUC-N. A few words from David:

Why a Virtual Field Course in Ecostar?

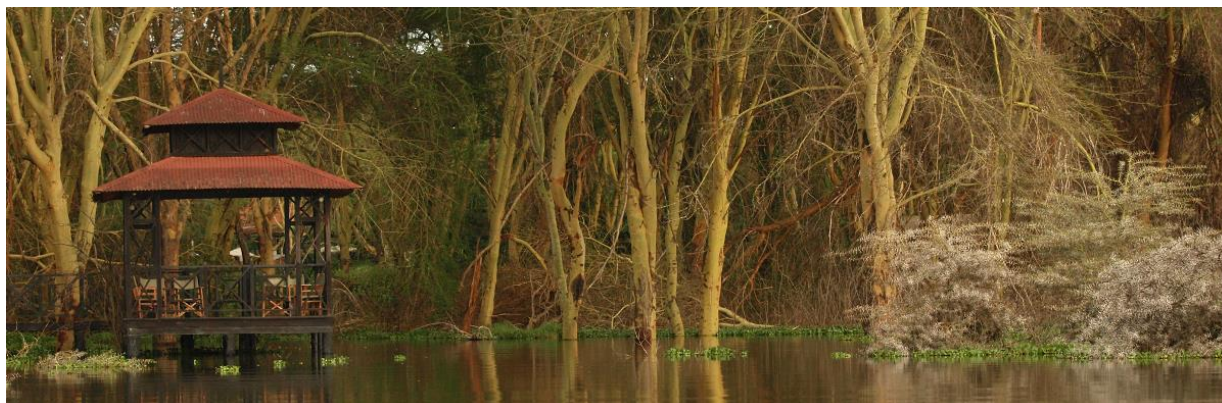
I am a freshwater ecologist; I have carried out research on lakes in the East African Great Rift Valley for all my professional life, often illustrating my ecology lectures in the UK using the research results and the pictures of myself and colleagues at these lakes. These results included, ten years ago, a project funded by the UK's Darwin Initiative, which brought in young English film-makers to teach Kenyan conservation scientists how to make films. The idea of a virtual field course was born then, to link the films we made with the science that we researched. We were able to make a small trial website with a later grant from the British Council, called 'Field IT for East Africa', which gave young academics from Kenya & Tanzania field research experience on two-week practical expeditions.





Experience teaching on the British Council project, together with teaching Leicester students on field courses in Kenya (which began about 6 years ago), made me aware of the great need for people not just to read about science and nature outside their normal range, but to experience it too. The films proved of great interest to students who could not go to Kenya.

The Rift lakes are unique in the world, so our idea for a Virtual Field Course, as an open educational learning resource, was born. The content of the VFC can be easily integrated into any of the 6 units of the Sustainable Futures course developed for the EMI work package, and can just as easily be used as multimedia learning resources in the English language courses.



Lake Naivasha, a world-renowned freshwater lake in Kenya where I have done most of my work, seemed a very suitable topic because the lake is of global interest. It has great biodiversity value, but also provides water for the largest cut-flower industry in Kenya, which sends roses all over the world. It is the fastest-growing area of Kenya as a result of the inward migration of people from other parts of the country looking for work. Ecologically, the lake has valuable biodiversity and a strong tourist sector, yet this is supported by an ecosystem that has an alien (foreign) species at every level of its food chain – top predator down to algae – what scientists now call a “novel ecosystem”. The teaching of and in English around these global issues will provide a fascinating learning opportunity for becoming more informed, while improving language skills.

WP5 – ECOSTAR Website

There have been major developments in the ECOSTAR website since the last consortium meeting in Maastricht. Many face-to-face meetings in Tel Aviv, emails and Skype calls resulted in a new look to the Moodle site where abstract ideas for the website were translated by Sigalit Livnat of IUCC into reality. We very much appreciate all of Sigalit’s efforts and her patience. The Moodle website hosts the ECOSTAR courses – the EMI Sustainable Futures course and the Professional Development Program for English teachers. A new website is under construction and will serve as the public face of the ECOSTAR project, providing a permanent home for the ECOSTAR framework, the repository and other non-course products. Thank you to Keren Berkovitz of OBC who is collaborating closely with all of the partners on the website which will soon be going public on the ECOSTAR servers.

Report on CEFR Symposium

On May 19, 2016, the third annual symposium on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) was held at Tel Aviv University (TAU). The symposium was a joint effort of the Division of Foreign Languages and the Program for Multilingual Education at TAU, NITE (the National Institute for Testing and Evaluation), the Goethe Institut and the Institut Français in Israel. The highlight of the symposium, entitled “International Language Standards: Opportunities in the Making,” was the launch of the newly translated Hebrew version of the CEFR, which was presented by Dr. Rosalie Sitman, Head of the Division of Foreign Languages, to Ms.



DR. ROSALIE SITMAN, TAU (LEFT) PRESENTS THE HEBREW VERSION OF THE CEFR TO MS. TAMAR KEHAT, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Tamar Kehat, Inspector for Chinese, German and Italian at the Ministry of Education.

Following opening greetings by Prof. Eyal Zisser, Vice Rector at TAU, the first panel was devoted to the brief history of the CEFR in Israel. Jorg Klinner (Goethe Institut) summarized the previous symposia and the progress made from its introduction to language programs and other stakeholders to its implementation in a variety of settings. Dr. Ruth Fortus, who headed the translation team at NITE, described some of the issues involved in translating the document from English to Hebrew, and the decisions taken to resolve them. Philippe Guillien (Institut Français) presented an example of how the CEFR is used in an online course for French, while Prof. Ofra Inbar (TAU) outlined various fields and areas of expertise where implementation of the CEFR could have great potential and impact. In the next session, Dr. Miri Yemini (TAU) and Marissa Gross Yarm (National ERASMUS+ Office) discussed salient issues regarding the internationalization of higher education in Israel, international mobility and student exchange programs. Dr. Hanna Zafirir (Department of Nursing, Ministry of Health) highlighted the need for professional language standards in licensure exams and the challenges faced by speakers of diverse languages. Dr. Linda Weinberg (ORT Braude College) discussed the implementation of the CEFR in English in higher education, through the ECOSTAR project. Representatives from the Goethe Institut stationed in Cairo, Morocco and Ramallah/Gaza (Susanne Baumgart, Karin Ende and Urte Leopold, respectively) described the current situation regarding implementation of the CEFR in German and other languages, while Ivonne Lerner (Cervantes Institute) gave an overview of how the CEFR is used in Spanish language courses for Israelis of Sephardic heritage who are seeking Spanish citizenship. The impact of the CEFR in large scale assessment was discussed by Sebastien Portelli (International Center for Pedagogical Studies, Paris), who presented the Ev@lang online language assessment tool and by Lucy Shulman (British Council), who presented the Aptis test.



ELANA SPECTOR COEHN WITH JORG KLINNER OF THE GOETHE INSTITUT

The Hebrew version of the CEFR can be accessed at: <https://nite.org.il/files/CEFR.pd>



Dissemination



IDC Herzliya Joins TEMPUS ECOSTAR Project

The TEMPUS ECOSTAR project (<http://tempus-ecostar.iucc.ac.il/>) brings together Israeli and European institutes of higher education in an aim to modernize and standardize tertiary-level English as a Foreign Language programs and develop a new framework for English teaching in Israeli colleges and universities. IDC Herzliya's EFL Unit is one of the Israeli partners in the consortium, along with Tel Aviv University, Ort Braude College of Engineering, the Open University of Israel, the National Institute for Testing and Evaluation, and the National Union of Students. The consortium also includes universities from Italy, Cyprus, Romania, England, the Netherlands and Poland.

The project began after research showed that many Israeli graduates felt that the English they had studied at college or university was

inadequate for their future careers. Most EFL programs in Israeli tertiary institutions still overemphasize preparation for academic reading comprehension examinations, at the expense of skills such as speaking and writing. The project aims to ensure Israeli graduates will be better equipped to communicate effectively in the global work environment. The first stage of the project includes the creation of a national framework aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

The IDC team, comprising Dr. Miriam Symon, Dr. Daniel Portman, Dr. Leor Cohen, Monica Broido, Avigail Kirschenbaum-Noy and Noa Kadman, is responsible for developing instructional resources and integrating communication skills as part of the new framework. These learning resources feature new blended learning



Representatives from Maastricht University, the Netherlands, and the UNIVAQ University of L'Aquila, Italy, at a workshop for EFL instructors at IDC Herzliya in June 2015.

formats that incorporate open educational resources and mobile learning to promote self-study beyond the classroom, and they are currently being piloted in Israel and Europe.



Dear ECOSTAR partners,

Please document your meetings with photos, and send us, in real-time, summaries, articles, research, news and references of interest, to be added to the website and included in the next newsletter.

These will also be included in our final report.

In best support, and looking forward to a fruitful 5th consortium meeting

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