



Committee for the Evaluation of English Teacher Education Study Programs

Beit Berl College

Department of English

Evaluation Report

November 2017

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Chapter 1: Background

The Council for Higher Education (CHE) decided to evaluate study programs in the field of English Teacher Education during the academic year of 2016-2017.

Following the decision of the CHE, the Vice Chair of the CHE appointed a Committee consisting of:

- **Prof. Claude Goldenberg**, Stanford University, USA - committee chair
- **Prof. Charlene Rivera**, The George Washington University, Washington DC, USA.
- **Prof. JoAnn (Jodi) Crandall**, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, USA.
- **Prof. Malatesha Joshi**, Texas A&M, USA.
- **Prof. Janina Brutt-Griffler**, The State University of New York at Buffalo, USA.
- **Prof. Penny Ur**, Oranim Academic College, Israel.
- **Prof. Bernard Spolsky** (Emeritus), Bar-Ilan University, Israel.
- **Prof. Hana Wirth-Nesher**, Tel-Aviv University, Israel.

Ms. Maria Levinson-Or served as the Coordinator of the Committee on behalf of the CHE.

Within the framework of its activity, the Committee was requested to:¹

1. Examine the self-evaluation reports, submitted by the institutions that provide study programs in English Teacher Education, and to conduct on-site visits at those institutions.
2. Submit to the CHE an individual report on each of the evaluated academic units and study programs, including the Committee's findings and recommendations.
3. Submit to the CHE a general report regarding the examined field of study within the Israeli system of higher education including recommendations for standards in the evaluated field of study.

The entire process was conducted in accordance with the CHE's Guidelines for Self-Evaluation (of September 2015).

¹ The Committee's letter of appointment is attached as **Appendix 1**.

Chapter 2: Committee Procedures

The Committee held its first meetings on 21.05.2017, during which it discussed fundamental issues concerning higher education in Israel, the quality assessment activity, as well as English Teacher Education Study programs in Israel.

In May 2017, the Committee held its first visit of evaluation, and visited the David Yellin Academic College of Education, Talpiot College of Education, Jerusalem College, Orot Yisrael College, Kaye Academic College of Education, and Herzog College. During the visits, the Committee met with various stakeholders at the institutions, including management, faculty, staff, and students.

In June 2017, the Committee held an additional visit of evaluation, and visited Levinsky College of Education, Beit Berl College (including the Arab Academic Institute), and Kibbutzim College of Education. Similar to the previous visits, the Committee met with various stakeholders at the institutions, including management, faculty, staff and students.

This report deals with the Department of English Teacher Education at Beit Berl College. The Committee's visit to Beit Berl College took place on June 13, 2017.

Due to scheduling considerations, the committee split into two groups and held simultaneous visits in the institutions. The group which visited Beit Berl College was chaired by Professor Goldenberg and included Professor Crandall, Professor Ur and Professor Wirth-Nesher.

The schedule of the visit is attached as **Appendix 2**.

The Committee thanks the management of Beit Berl College and the Department of English Teacher Education for their self-evaluation report and for their hospitality towards the committee during its visit at the institution.

Chapter 3: Evaluation of English Teacher Education Study Program at Beit Berl College

This Report relates to the situation current at the time of the visit to the institution, and does not take account of any subsequent changes. The Report records the conclusions reached by the Evaluation Committee based on the documentation provided by the institution, information gained through interviews, discussion and observation as well as other information available to the Committee.

1. Executive Summary

Beit Berl College is unique in that it is the only Academic College of Education that operates two nearly autonomous programs within the Faculty of Education: one in the Teacher and Education Training Unit, the other in the Arab Academic Institute of Education. These include full B.Ed. programs and retraining of academics for English teaching. The organization and relationship between these two programs is in transition, which produces some challenges and opportunities. Beit Berl is pioneering in the development of an integrated Jewish and Arab Program in Education. It also has a five-year goal of phasing out the B.Ed. and moving all teacher education to graduate study.

The unique model that will be developed integrating the Jewish and Arab programs offers unprecedented opportunities for conducting on-site participatory research to document and analyze the program's development. The data that might be collected, which can encompass a variety of disciplines and research methods, could be valuable to the entire field of higher education in Israel and internationally.

There is overall a warm atmosphere and open-door policy among faculty, administration, students, and alumni. There is continuing contact with alumni and programs of support in graduates' early years of teaching. We applaud the fact that the College takes care to maintain contact with its alumni, and we were particularly impressed with the Spreading Wings support group for teachers during their first three years of professional practice. Alumni are invited to the student conference, another indication of the close ties among College personnel and students past and present.

Faculty and administration make concerted efforts to elicit and consider student feedback on course quality. This effort is exemplified by the efforts being made to increase the rate of students' responses, with the Head of the English Department personally visiting classes to solicit feedback. As we note below, we encourage faculty and administrators to involve students not only in providing course evaluations but also in the ongoing development and evolution of the College's programs.

Several other aspects of Beit Berl's program are noteworthy:

- Multiculturalism, both its challenges and its opportunities, is prominent in the courses and discussions among faculty and students.
- There are opportunities for faculty and administrators to review compatibility between faculty members' areas of expertise and courses they teach.
- Students and faculty have opportunities to travel in exchange programs and participate in joint conferences with students and faculty in other institutions.
- Concentrated periods of one week of practice, supplementing the regular one-day-a-week, provide excellent opportunities to become better acquainted with the schools, classes, students, etc. and to teach consecutive lessons.
- The program is multi-track, requiring students to be effective in both elementary and secondary contexts.
- Substantial grants are available to encourage research and travel to conferences by faculty.
- Extra-curricular events, like the yearly student conference, and initiatives, like the voluntary work with the elderly, contribute to the sense of enthusiasm and dedication of both faculty and students.

Overall, with a few exceptions, the program provides adequate preparation for successful beginning teaching. We have a number of suggestions in three categories: Study Programs, Human Resources/Faculty, and Infrastructure. We also have two suggestions for the proposed partial merger of the two English programs

2. Study Programs

Observations and findings

Overall curriculum

Taken together the curricula of the two programs provide systematic coverage of content in the four main areas of linguistics, language-teaching methodology, literature, and proficiency. However, the curriculum is not consistent with contemporary curricular approaches, which treat English as an *international* language (EIL) rather than as a *foreign* language (EFL).

Courses

Some online courses were perceived to be effective, but others were not, mainly because of the limited opportunities for discussion and interaction with faculty. We suggest

either offering fewer online courses or making them hybrids (blended learning) in order to permit more interaction among students and faculty.

Syllabi

The layout, organization, and content of the actual syllabi are inconsistent and sometimes rather short and superficial. The bibliographies seem in many cases out of date and it is not always clear what readings and other resources are required for the course.

Literature

The literature courses currently offered in the Arab Academic Institute (AI) and the Faculty of Education are not parallel. The merger creates an opportunity to review, update, and create a uniform program of study for literature which needs to take into account the increased diversity of the student population. It also provides an opportunity to broaden the issues addressed in literature courses to include different approaches to literary interpretation, genre, cultural context, and multiculturalism.

Linguistics

We believe the plan to offer linguistics courses to a mixed population of students is beneficial: students would benefit from learning together. There was some doubt expressed about whether the sociolinguistics course should be mixed in this way. In our view, students would benefit from taking this course if it were taught to both populations together. It would enable students to compare and contrast aspects of sociolinguistics in their respective cultures.

Proficiency

We are pleased that the College is developing an entrance examination that will align with the IELTS and that the English department places students in separate oral and written proficiency courses based on their proficiency levels. However, students who matriculate with low levels of English proficiency might need more support than they currently receive, while students who are highly proficient might not need some of the required coursework.

We also heard different perspectives about the different proficiency needs of the two populations of students (Arab and Jewish) and the best ways to address them. Proficiency courses are separated based on these perceived different needs. Our concern is that such separation has the effect of limiting interactions and mutual learning that could take place between the two student populations.

Culture and heritage courses

It will be important in the merger to retain courses specific to their own cultural heritage and language of both Jewish and Arab students. This is also an opportunity to add content that would widen Jewish students' knowledge and awareness of Arab language and

cultures. Arab students on the whole know Hebrew and quite a lot about Jewish customs; the reverse is not true.

Pedagogical courses

Much of the content of the English language pedagogy courses in the two programs is identical. It would seem logical to combine them. Nevertheless, there are substantial differences in the school contexts which need to be taken into account. Some of the methodology courses seem to be focusing on generalities, models, and approaches, combined with student presentations and opportunities to try these out, but there is not enough practical guidance from the course teacher with ideas for classroom teaching strategies and not enough information on the national curriculum and how to implement it.

Teaching practice

Currently, the teaching practice model is a combination of traditional and Professional Development School, or PDS (adapted as the Academia Kita model proposed by the Ministry of Education). We noted that there might be a problem within the PDS model of locating enough English teachers who are capable of being effective master teachers. We endorse the policy of having the same teachers teaching methodology and supervising teaching practice. It is important that these teachers have had substantial experience teaching in the Israeli education system – more important than possessing a PhD. At present, there is a constant flow of information and sharing between pedagogical advisors and other disciplinary teachers, because up to now they have been in the same department. This positive situation may be adversely affected by the proposed plan to separate the disciplinary studies from the pedagogical track. We endorse the current policy of giving students the opportunity to become familiar with a range of educational institutions in the first year, followed by a placement in elementary schools during the second year, and junior high schools during the third year. We also endorse the concentrated week of practice during which other teachers are asked to visit and observe.

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Essential/Important/Desirable</u>
Overall curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the diversity of students, across and within the Arab and Jewish populations, care should be taken to provide appropriate support to students who need it due to their widely different levels of familiarity with English cultures around the world and relatively low English proficiency levels. These students should take additional classes and participate in activities such as field trips to English-speaking settings and viewing and discussing movies from English-speaking countries. 	<i>Essential</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the internationalization of English and variable standards of what is considered English proficiency, we recommend an overall “English as an <i>international</i> language” orientation rather than an “English as a <i>foreign</i> language” one. 	Important
Courses	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be a more systematic and consistent review of individual courses based on student feedback and departmental observation. 	<i>Essential</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online courses should be reviewed to determine whether they are effective or if they should be given face-to-face or converted to hybrid (‘blended learning’) courses that permit more interaction among students and between students and teachers. 	Important
Syllabi	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabi should have a uniform format, including at least: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Title ○ Year offered ○ One- or two-semester ○ Year of program, if relevant ○ How often given, if relevant ○ Number of hours/credits ○ Prerequisites ○ Mandatory or elective ○ Goals/Learning outcomes (as defined in the self-evaluation guidelines) ○ Course description/summary ○ Week-by-week content, assignments, and readings ○ Assessment ○ Bibliography 	<i>Essential</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course titles of the syllabi documents should clearly correspond with course content. 	<i>Essential</i>
Literature	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory literature courses should address issues of different approaches to interpretation of literary texts, genre, cultural and historical context, and the multicultural dimension of Anglophone literatures (including majority and minority perspectives expressed in literary texts and methods of analysis). 	<i>Essential</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The curriculum should provide a balance of broad, overview courses and more specialized, in-depth (elective) ones. 	<i>Essential</i>
Linguistics	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses in linguistics, including sociolinguistics, should be taught to mixed populations of students. 	Desirable
Proficiency	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The College should provide extra proficiency courses during the first year for students needing them. 	<i>Essential</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At most levels, the Arabic-speaking and Hebrew-speaking students should have proficiency courses together. 	Important
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students with high proficiency in oral or written language should be eligible for exemption from the later proficiency courses in those skills. 	Important
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although students should continue to study together (Arab and Jewish) in most courses, it may be advisable for them to study separately in the final seminars if there are still substantial differences in writing proficiency after the extension of the number of hours in writing proficiency. 	Desirable
Culture and heritage courses	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jewish students should have opportunities to study Arab cultures and the Arabic language. 	Desirable
Pedagogical courses	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses on methodology should include more guidance on practical teaching strategies and procedures and opportunities to try these out. 	<i>Essential</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course on classroom management should be compulsory. 	<i>Essential</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methodology classes should be taught to mixed populations and should include components that address the specific needs of both Jewish and Arabic schools. 	Important
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new program should ensure a balance of attention to pedagogy in both elementary and secondary contexts, including teaching for bagrut. 	Important
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The content and use of the national curriculum should be included in pedagogical courses. 	Important
Teaching practice	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedagogical instructors should have substantial teaching experience, preferably in the Israeli state school system. 	<i>Essential</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedagogical advisors should be able to place their students with teachers who are good models of effective English language teaching and able to provide appropriate guidance. 	<i>Essential</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty members involved in the didactic and practicum spheres (those who teach both theoretical and applied courses) must hold, at minimum, a Master's degree, teacher certification and/or prior work experience in the education system. 	Important
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every effort should be made to maintain close ties between the pedagogical advisors and teachers of disciplinary courses. 	Important
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program should enable students to gain experience teaching in schools not from their sector if they so wish. 	Desirable

3. Human Resources/Faculty

Observations and findings

Teacher development

Grants are available for research and conference participation, as well faculty exchanges. There is careful selection and induction of new pedagogical advisors. In terms of induction for other faculty, the College provides an orientation day, and on an individual and voluntary basis, there is some mentoring and support, but this is not systematically organized or mandatory. Similarly, professional development takes place primarily as a result of individual initiative. The professional development offered by the College is largely focused on information technology and its role in teaching and learning. Professional development events are often offered at times when faculty are teaching. The faculty currently have limited time for research, but with the move to the Planning and Budgeting Committee ('Vatat'), this should improve.

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Essential/Important/Desirable</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In addition to the orientation day for new faculty, there should be a systematic and consistent process of induction, not dependent on the goodwill or dedication of individual veteran teachers. This should include provision of a mentor and observation by the Head of the Department.	Important
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seminars and workshops for teacher development of faculty should extend beyond a focus on IT or IT-associated innovations, with structured opportunities for sharing and development.	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professional development opportunities should be scheduled to accommodate the needs of as many teachers as possible, including adjunct faculty.	Desirable

4. Infrastructure

Observations and findings

The library includes all the main books needed for the program. Some, however, are in outdated editions. Some key journals seem to be missing.

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Essential/Important/Desirable</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online subscriptions to the major English-teacher journals should be updated, including <i>ELT Journal</i>, <i>English Teaching Professional</i>, <i>Language Teaching</i>, <i>TESOL Quarterly</i>, and <i>English Teaching Forum</i>.	Important
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key linguistics and English language teaching texts should be updated to the latest editions.	Important

5. The Proposed Partial Merger of the Two English Programs

Observations and findings

The proposed merger may lead to an increase in class size. Care must be taken to ensure that classes that require interaction and discussion be of limited size. Currently, students and alumni know very little about the proposed merger and are therefore unable to provide their insights to help address and anticipate potential issues and opportunities.

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Essential/Important/Desirable</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The number of students in oral proficiency courses, practical pedagogical courses, and seminars should not exceed 20.	<i>Essential</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Representatives of students and (possibly) alumni should be informed about merger plans and included in the planning process.	Important

Chapter 4 – Summary of Recommendations

Essential

- Given the diversity of students, across and within the Arab and Jewish populations, care should be taken to provide appropriate support to students who need it due to their widely different levels of familiarity with English cultures around the world and relatively low English proficiency levels. These students should take additional classes and participate in activities such as field trips to English-speaking settings and viewing and discussing movies from English-speaking countries.
- There should be a more systematic and consistent review of individual courses based on student feedback and departmental observation.
- Syllabi should have a uniform format, including at least:
 - Title
 - Year offered
 - One- or two-semester
 - Year of program, if relevant
 - How often given, if relevant
 - Number of hours/credits
 - Prerequisites
 - Mandatory or elective
 - Goals/Learning outcomes (as defined in the self-evaluation guidelines)
 - Course description/summary
 - Week-by-week content, assignments, and readings
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 - Bibliography
- Course titles of the syllabi documents should clearly correspond with course content.
- Mandatory literature courses should address issues of different approaches to interpretation of literary texts, genre, cultural and historical context, and the multicultural dimension of Anglophone literatures (including majority and minority perspectives expressed in literary texts and methods of analysis).
- The curriculum should provide a balance of broad, overview courses and more specialized, in-depth (elective) ones.
- The College should provide extra proficiency courses during the first year for students needing them.
- Courses on methodology should include more guidance on practical teaching strategies and procedures and opportunities to try these out.
- The course on classroom management should be compulsory.

- Pedagogical instructors should have substantial teaching experience, preferably in the Israeli state school system.
- Pedagogical advisors should be able to place their students with teachers who are good models of effective English language teaching and able to provide appropriate guidance.
- The number of students in oral proficiency courses, practical pedagogical courses, and seminars should not exceed 20.

Important

- Due to the internationalization of English and variable standards of what is considered English proficiency, we recommend an overall “English as an *international* language” orientation rather than an “English as a *foreign* language” one.
- Online courses should be reviewed to determine whether they are effective or if they should be given face-to-face or converted to hybrid (“blended learning”) courses that permit more interaction among students and between students and teachers.
- At most levels, the Arabic-speaking and Hebrew-speaking students should have proficiency courses together.
- Students with high proficiency in oral or written language should be eligible for exemption from the later proficiency courses in those skills.
- Methodology classes should be taught to mixed populations and should include components that address the specific needs of both Jewish and Arabic schools.
- The new program should ensure a balance of attention to pedagogy in both elementary and secondary contexts, including teaching for bagrut.
- The content and use of the national curriculum should be included in pedagogical courses.
- Faculty members involved in the didactic and practicum spheres (those who teach both theoretical and applied courses) must hold, at minimum, a Master’s degree, teacher certification and/or prior work experience in the education system.
- Every effort should be made to maintain close ties between the pedagogical advisors and teachers of disciplinary courses.
- In addition to the orientation day for new faculty, there should be a systematic and consistent process of induction, not dependent on the goodwill or dedication of individual veteran teachers. This should include provision of a mentor and observation by the HOD.
- Online subscriptions to the major English-teacher journals should be updated, including *ELT Journal*, *English Teaching Professional*, *Language Teaching*, *TESOL Quarterly*, and *English Teaching Forum*.

- Key linguistics and English language teaching texts should be updated to the latest editions.
- Representatives of students and (possibly) alumni should be informed about merger plans and included in the planning process.

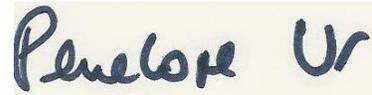
Desirable

- Courses in linguistics, including sociolinguistics, should be taught to mixed populations of students.
- Although students should continue to study together (Arab and Jewish) in most courses, it may be advisable for them to study separately in the final seminars if there are still substantial differences in writing proficiency after the extension of the number of hours in writing proficiency.
- Jewish students should have opportunities to study Arab cultures and the Arabic language.
- The program should enable students to gain experience teaching in schools not from their sector if they so wish.
- Seminars and workshops for teacher development of faculty should extend beyond a focus on IT or IT-associated innovations, with structured opportunities for sharing and development.
- Professional development opportunities should be scheduled to accommodate the needs of as many teachers as possible, including adjunct faculty.

Signed by:



Prof. Claude Goldenberg - Chair



Prof. Penny Ur



Prof. JoAnn (Jodi) Crandall



Prof. Hana Wirth-Nesher

Appendix 1: Letter of Appointment



January 2017

Prof. Claude Goldenberg
Graduate School of Education
Stanford University
USA

Dear Professor,

The Israeli Council for Higher Education (CHE) strives to ensure the continuing excellence and quality of Israeli higher education through a systematic evaluation process. By engaging upon this mission, the CHE seeks: to enhance and ensure the quality of academic studies, to provide the public with information regarding the quality of study programs in institutions of higher education throughout Israel, and to ensure the continued integration of the Israeli system of higher education in the international academic arena.

As part of this important endeavor we reach out to world renowned academicians to help us meet the challenges that confront the Israeli higher education by accepting our invitation to participate in our international evaluation committees. This process establishes a structure for an ongoing consultative process around the globe on common academic dilemmas and prospects.

I therefore deeply appreciate your willingness to join us in this crucial enterprise.

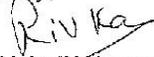
It is with great pleasure that I hereby appoint you to serve as chair of the Council for Higher Education's Committee for the Evaluation of the study programs in **English Teacher Education**. In addition to yourself, the composition of the Committee will be as follows: Prof. Janina Brutt-Griffier, prof. JoAnn (Jodi) Crandall, prof. Malatesha Joshi, prof. Charlene Rivera, prof. Bernard Spolsky, Penny Ur and prof. Hana Wirth-Nesher.

Ms. Maria Levinson-Or will be the coordinator of the Committee.

Details regarding the operation of the committee and its mandate are provided in the enclosed appendix.

I wish you much success in your role as a member of this most important committee.

Sincerely,


Dr. Rivka Wadmany
Vice Chair,
The Council for Higher Education (CHE)

Enclosures: Appendix to the Appointment Letter of Evaluation Committees

cc: Dr. Varda Ben-Shaul, Deputy Director-General for QA, CHE
Ms. Maria Levinson-Or, Committee Coordinator

Appendix 2: Site Visit Schedule

<u>English Teacher Education – Schedule of site visit</u> <u>Beit Berl College</u>		
13.06.17, Conference room, Administration Building		
09:00-09:45	Opening session with the heads of the institution	Prof. Tamar Ariav (President), Prof. Amos Hofman (VP for Academic Affairs), Dr. Daniella Schonker (Head Quality Assurance Unit)
09:45-10:30	Meeting with the Dean, Faculty of Education	Prof. Bracha Alpert (Dean), Dr. Elana Milstein (Head Teacher Training Unit)
10:30-11:15	Meeting with the Head Arab Academic Institute of Education	Dr. Ali Watad (Head Arab Academic Institute), Dr. Kussai Haj Yihya
11:15-11:30	Break	
11:30-12:20	Meeting with the Heads of the Departments	Dr. Susie Russak, Dr. Reem Bshara
12:20-13:15	Meeting with senior academic staff of both programs* (up to 8)	Dr. Orly Haim, Prof. Anat Stavans, Dr. Pamela Peled, Prof. Muhammad Amara, Dr. Wael Tibi
13:15 – 14:00	Lunch (in the same room)	Closed-door meeting of the committee
14:00-14:45	Meeting with pedagogical instructors of both programs* (up to 8)	Ms. Karen Abel, Dr. Hagit Rifinski , Dr. Daniel Portman, Dr. Ruwaida Abu-Ras, Nassrin Rabi
14:45-15:15	Open slot	Tour
15:15 – 16:00	Meeting with BA and PGCE students of both programs* (up to 8)	
16:00-16:45	Meeting with Alumni** (up to 6)	
16:45-17:05	Closed-door meeting of the committee	
17:05-17:30	Closing meeting with the heads of the study program	Prof. Tamar Ariav, Prof. Amos Hofman, Prof. Bracha Alpert, Dr. Ali Watad, Dr. Susie Russak, Dr. Reem Bshara, Dr. Elana Milstein, Dr. Daniella Schonker.