



Committee for the Evaluation of English Teacher Education Study Programs

Levinsky College of Education

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 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 Levinsky College of Education. The Committee's visit to Levinsky College took place on June 12, 2017.

Due to scheduling considerations, the committee split into two groups and held simultaneous visits in the institutions. The group that visited Levinsky 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 Levinsky College of Education 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 Levinsky College of Education

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

The Levinsky College of Education defines itself as “a Jewish college,” catering mostly to Jewish students, although the college is open to anyone of any ethnicity or nationality. There is greater diversity at the college level, however, than at the English department level.

There is a good atmosphere evident, with helpful and committed instructors. The head of the English department is highly regarded as a caring, accessible, and dedicated educator. There is a strong emphasis on students acquiring pedagogical skills as indicated, for example, by the teaching practicum beginning in year 1 of the program. The simulations in these courses appear to be very useful. There is a wide range of course offerings available to students. Both literature and pedagogy of literature courses are included in the curriculum.

The library includes the main books needed for the program.

Students take courses in the four skills and are tested in composition, grammar, reading comprehension, and speaking at the end of every semester of the first two years.

Overall, we conclude that the program provides adequate preparation for successful beginning teaching, although with some reservations. We recommend a number of changes falling into three categories: Study Programs, Human Resources/Faculty, and Infrastructure.

2. Study Programs

Observations and findings

Overall curriculum

The current curriculum includes courses in pedagogy, linguistics, and literature, with substantial overlap and a preponderance of isolated, single semester courses. In particular, we found a number of courses focused on learning disabilities (in Hebrew and English) that could be combined. There was some dissatisfaction expressed with the quality of the instruction in some courses. In particular, online courses were perceived to be of variable utility, with limited opportunities for discussion and interaction with faculty. We found several instances of overlap and repetition of content between courses (e.g. basic features of English grammar repeated in linguistics and grammar courses), and gaps (e.g. the course on Curriculum does not include the current Israeli English curriculum).

Syllabi

Syllabi generally lacked consistent formats, including title and course objectives.

Literature courses

Other than 'Introduction to literature', most of the literature courses are narrow and over-specialized.

Culture and heritage courses

All of the courses offered to comply with the requirement of culture and heritage were in the domain of religious (Jewish) culture. Additional aspects of culture and heritage, e.g., music, art, architecture, food, literature, and content relating to other cultures do not appear to receive attention. This is particularly significant in light of the College's policy of multiculturalism and its practice of inviting speakers to expose students to cultural aspects of English around the world (p.2 of the Self Evaluation document).

Linguistics

Linguistics courses do not provide adequate systematic coverage of second or third language acquisition and learning, the structure of English (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, especially grammar and vocabulary), language assessment, pragmatics and sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics. We found a large number of linguistics courses taught through Hebrew.

Proficiency

If students pass any of the four proficiency tests, they are exempted from taking that test again, but they are required to continue taking the proficiency courses, including even very highly proficient students. Some of the proficiency courses are very large.

Language teaching methodology

The language teaching methodology courses (e.g., Research Practicum, Pedagogy of Beginning Reading, Pedagogy of Beginning Writing, and Pedagogy of Speaking and Listening Comprehension) in general focus too much on generalized models and theories and do not provide enough practical guidance for classroom teaching. There is a mandatory course on Teaching Young Learners that seems to focus on pre-school teaching; according to Ministry of Education policy, English teaching should begin at third grade.

Teaching Practice

There are different perspectives among faculty and administration about the degree of collaboration and coordination between those responsible for the practicum and those responsible for the language-teaching methodology courses. A main issue is whether the pedagogical advisors should be part of the English Department or of the Faculty of Education. An additional issue is whether the Professional Development School (PDS) model or the

traditional model is preferable. Students found the simulations in their practicum courses to be very useful and would like more of these.

| <u>Recommendation</u> | <u>Essential/Important/Desirable</u> |
|--|---|
| Overall curriculum | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be systematic coverage of important content in the four main areas of literature, linguistics, language-teaching methodology and proficiency. | <i>Essential</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overlap in content between courses and redundant courses should be identified and eliminated. | <i>Essential</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaps in important content should be identified and eliminated. | <i>Essential</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty and administrators should review individual courses based on student feedback and departmental observation. | Important |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online courses should be reviewed to ensure they are effective in helping students acquire the covered content. | 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 bibliographies should be updated regularly. | <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 courses | |
| <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 required literary studies component should be extended to at least 6 semester or 3 yearly mandatory courses, in addition to the Seminar. | Important |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students should be provided with a choice in topics for the literature seminar. | Desirable |
| Culture and heritage courses | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students should be provided with opportunities to study diverse expressions of both religious and secular cultures. | Important |
| Linguistics | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most linguistics courses should be taught through English. | Important |
| Proficiency | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students who are very proficient in any skill should be exempted from further courses focusing on that skill. | Important |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficiency courses for less proficient students should be added to the third-year curriculum. | Important |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral proficiency classes should be limited to enrollments of no more than 20 students. | Important |
| Language teaching methodology | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language-teaching methodology courses should provide practical guidance for classroom teaching of English including actual procedures and their underlying rationales. | <i>Essential</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course on teaching young learners should focus on the teaching of school-age children. | Important |
| Teaching Practice | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The same teachers should be teaching methodology and supervising the practicum or there should be very close coordination between the two. | <i>Essential</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the PDS model ('Academia Kita') is adopted, students should be placed with exemplary English teachers. | Important |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be more simulations and microteaching. | Desirable |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education courses specific to teaching English (pedagogical content knowledge) should be within the English department. | Desirable |

3. Human Resources/Faculty

Observations and findings

There seems to be no systematic induction process other than an induction day for new teachers. In some cases, potentially effective pedagogical advisors were not hired because they did not have a doctorate.

| <u>Recommendation</u> | <u>Essential/Important/Desirable</u> |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teachers teaching courses on practical language-teaching methodology and supervising the practicum should be selected on the basis of their professional knowledge and expertise, rather than research and publications. | <i>Essential</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">There should be mentors for new faculty appointments and regular observations and feedback by the English Department head. | Important |

4. Infrastructure

Observations and findings

Some of the main books needed for the program are in outdated editions in the library. Some key journals seem to be missing.

| <u>Recommendation</u> | <u>Essential/Important/Desirable</u> |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Subscriptions to <i>TESOL Quarterly</i> and <i>ELT Journal</i> online should be renewed. | Important |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">The following journals should be added: <i>English Teaching Professional</i>, <i>Language Teaching</i>, and <i>English Teaching Forum</i>. | Important |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Key linguistics and English language teaching texts should be updated. | Important |

Chapter 4 – Summary of Recommendations

Essential:

- There should be systematic coverage of important content in the four main areas of literature, linguistics, language-teaching methodology and proficiency.
- Overlap in content between courses and redundant courses should be identified and eliminated.
- Gaps in important content should be identified and eliminated.
- 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
 - Assessment
 - Bibliography
- Course bibliographies should be updated regularly.
- 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).
- Language-teaching methodology courses should provide practical guidance for classroom teaching of English including actual procedures and their underlying rationales.
- The same teachers should be teaching methodology and supervising the practicum or there should be very close coordination between the two.
- Teachers teaching courses on practical language-teaching methodology and supervising the practicum should be selected on the basis of their professional knowledge and expertise, rather than research and publications.

Important:

- Faculty and administrators should review individual courses based on student feedback and departmental observation.
- Online courses should be reviewed to ensure they are effective in helping students acquire the covered content.
- The literary studies component should be extended to at least 6 semester or 3 yearly mandatory courses, in addition to the Seminar.
- Students should be provided with opportunities to study diverse expressions of both religious and secular cultures.
- Most linguistics courses should be taught through English.
- Students who are very proficient in any skill should be exempted from further courses focusing on that skill.
- Proficiency courses for less proficient students should be added to the third-year curriculum.
- Oral proficiency classes should be limited to enrollments of no more than 20 students.
- The course on teaching young learners should focus on the teaching of school-age children.
- If the PDS model ('Academia Kita') is adopted, students should be placed with exemplary English teachers.
- There should be mentors for new faculty appointments and regular observations and feedback by the English Department head.
- Subscriptions to *TESOL Quarterly* and *ELT Journal* online should be renewed.
- The following journals should be added: *English Teaching Professional*, *Language Teaching*, and *English Teaching Forum*.
- Key linguistics and English language teaching texts should be updated.

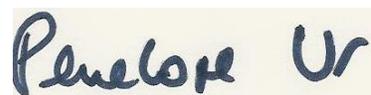
Desirable:

- Students should be provided with a choice in topics for the literature seminar.
- There should be more simulations and microteaching.
- Education courses specific to teaching English (pedagogical content knowledge) should be within the English department.

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.

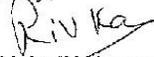
It is with great pleasure that I hereby appoint you to serve as chair of the Council for Higher Education's Committee for the Evaluation of the study programs in **English Teacher Education**. In addition to yourself, the composition of the Committee will be as follows: Prof. Janina Brutt-Griffier, prof. 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>Levinsky College of Education</u> | | |
| 12.06.17, Room 118, Levinsky College of Education | | |
| 09:00-09:45 | Opening session with the heads of the institution | Prof. Michal Beller (President), Prof. Hanna Ezer (Rector) |
| 09:45-10:30 | Meeting with the Head of the Multidisciplinary Studies Faculty | Prof. Yossi Raanan (Dean) |
| 10:30-11:15 | Meeting with the Head of the Department | Dr. Michele Horowitz (Head) |
| 11:15-11:30 | break | |
| 11:30-12:15 | Meeting with senior academic staff * | Dr. Gal Manor, Dr. Hadas Velan, Dr. Rachel Quastel, Dr. Frieda Amitai |
| 12:15-13:00 | Meeting with pedagogical instructors* | Dr. Ella Luria, Ms. Yael Aharon, Ms. Shiri Rosenberg, Dr. Drorit Ram |
| 13:00-13:45 | Lunch (in the same room) | Closed-door meeting of the committee |
| 13:45-14:30 | Open slot | Tour of the Campus. The accompanying member from the institution\department - TBD |
| 14:30-15:15 | Meeting with BA students | |
| 15:15-16:00 | Meeting with Alumni | |
| 16:00-16:20 | Closed-door meeting of the committee | |
| 16:20-16:45 | Closing meeting with the heads of the institutions and the head of the study program | Prof. Michal Beller (President), Prof. Hanna Ezer (Rector), Prof. Yossi Raanan (Dean), Dr. Michele Horowitz (Head) |

*The heads of the institution and academic unit or their representatives will not attend these meetings.