



**Committee for the Evaluation of English Teacher Education
Study Programs**

Orot Israel 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 Israel Academic College of Education, 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.

This report deals with the Department of English Teacher Education at the Orot Israel Academic College of Education. The Committee's visit to Orot Israel Academic College took place on May 23, 2017.

Due to scheduling considerations, the committee split into two groups and held simultaneous visits in the institutions. the group which visited the Orot Israel College was chaired by Professor Joshi and included Professor Rivera, Professor Spolsky, and Professor Brutt-Griffler.

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

The Committee thanks the management of the Orot Israel Academic 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 Orot Israel Academic 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

Orot College is the largest religious college in Israel, after its recent merger with the men's college at Rehovot, with 3000 students for B.Ed. and M.Ed. in both campuses. (The girls' campus, built with a major donation, includes dormitories for students and apartments for married students. It is in Elkana in Judea and Samaria, and therefore not under the CHE, because of its location. The boys' campus is in the nearby town of Rehovot.) The College considered a plan to merge with the Ariel University but did not proceed. It is planning to develop a program for teaching in Jewish diaspora communities.

The College recognizes that English is very important to open the gates to international education and recognizes that there is a serious lack of English teachers in Israel, especially in the state religious education sector.

It has not yet been possible to open the English program in Rehovot for men, as the Yeshivot only allow one day a week for secular studies, while the English department feels they need at least two days of classes, especially for the considerable work needed with students from religious schools, to acquire the level of English proficiency required to be teachers. This issue of training religious men as English teachers raises a number of problems. The men's yeshivot tend to downgrade secular studies and English, and some yeshivot will not permit women teachers, although it is women who mostly proceed with English Teacher Education Studies in Israel.

The College is planning to develop an office for evaluation to help plan improvement. It is also making a major effort to improve the quality and qualifications of faculty, both in its recruitment and in encouraging current staff to earn a doctoral degree. Given the established needs for good qualified teaching in the religious schools and the commitment of the College and departmental staff to providing excellent preparation, the College should be encouraged to continue their efforts to expand the program.

Overall, we conclude that with a few exceptions, the program provides adequate preparation for successful beginning teaching. Our recommendations for changes are in three areas: Study programs, human resources/faculty, and infrastructure.

2. Study Programs

Observations and findings

Curriculum and courses

The College finds it difficult to recruit qualified students, those with 80% in the five-point matriculation exam in English. The College therefore admits students with 90% in the four point examination on the basis of interviews, requiring these students to take a preparatory reading and writing course in English. This sets a major challenge to the program, as they need to pay extra attention to developing English proficiency. Some of the women come after two years of National Service, which may have exposed them to English, thus producing proficiency variations in the classes.

A related structural problem is that the curriculum offers English only as part of a double major. A more concentrated and extensive program would require English to be a single major, allowing more hours, and adding the teaching of additional courses presently taught in Hebrew (English teaching methodology, second and foreign language acquisition, language policy in a multilingual immigrant society, for instance) in English.

The double major does not provide sufficient time for the preparation especially of those who will teach at the secondary level.

There is no English program at the men's campus in Rehovot.

English teachers in religious schools often work with socioeconomically and linguistically diverse language learners, which is both a challenge and a tremendous opportunity. Students from the periphery are not exposed to much English at home or in the neighborhood, which impacts their language proficiency.

The literature curriculum is not always relevant to teacher preparation.

The methodology in the two tracks is not sufficiently differentiated for the needs of the students in the elementary and the junior high tracks.

Syllabi

Syllabi for different courses do not follow a common pattern, and many recent publications are not included in the course bibliographies.

Practical Training

Practical training starts during the second year after students complete a methods course and teach five lessons in a small-group setting in different classes. During the third year, students also teach five lessons and a final Test Lesson.

Classroom observations in English begin only after the methodology course is completed. Earlier classroom observations would give students a clearer notion of the problems of being a teacher.

<u>Recommendations</u>	<u>Essential/Important/Desirable</u>
<u>Curriculum and courses</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The English Department should add an additional course on second language acquisition and multilingualism to prepare English language teachers to work with the diverse student population. 	<i>Essential</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The link between the literary studies and pedagogy training should be made explicit to students, and methodologies for teaching literature to different age students should be included in the literature course. 	<i>Essential</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content relating to assessment, specific methodologies about reading, writing, speaking should be included in courses. 	<i>Essential</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methodology in the two tracks (elementary and junior high) should be differentiated to reflect developmental differences between younger and older children. Offering a single and double major provides an opportunity to strengthen and clarify the goals of each track. 	<i>Essential</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another course in oral English proficiency in the third year should be added. 	Important
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least some of the education courses should be taught in English. 	Important
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For those planning to teach at secondary level, the option of a single major should be offered. 	Important
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The literature curriculum should be made relevant to teacher preparation by including strategies and techniques for teaching English literature. 	Important
<u>Syllabi</u>	
<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 	<i>Essential</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Week-by-week content, assignments, and readings ○ Assessment ○ Bibliography 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Course readings should be up-to-date. 	Important
<u>Practical training</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Practical training and classroom observations should begin earlier with the observation of different classrooms. 	<i>Essential</i>

2. Human Resources / Faculty

Observations and findings

Throughout our observations, we learned that one of the underlying problems is the lack of recognition of and authority for English professionals. The administration is divided according to educational sectors (elementary, secondary, special) with administrators with offices and staff members to assist faculty members English faculty members share a small teachers' room and make use of sector secretaries. The lack of office facilities and staff members has affected administration of the critically important practice teaching, which calls for detailed knowledge and close association with English faculty members in the schools.

In spite of the lack of formal recognition, the teaching staff appears to be dedicated and cognizant of the importance of their task. Faculty members are appreciative of the demanding but warm mentoring of the program head and make strong efforts to meet the needs of students. Given the importance of oral proficiency, faculty members conduct regular proficiency tests and evaluations and provide extra individual guidance to students who do not reach the required standard by the third year. The English teachers appear to be of high quality. The students and graduates we spoke to commented that the program had improved their English reading and writing proficiency and had provided them the needed tools for successful teaching. However, while we observed the overload of work for students, we felt the different groups' need for more teaching of oral proficiency.

It is difficult to find appropriate placement for practice teaching due to a very small number of pedagogical advisors.

There is no administrative support staff for the English department, the support is divided among all the departments in the college.

<u>Recommendations</u>	<u>Essential/Important/Desirable</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The English department should have responsibility for practice teaching and the number of pedagogical advisors should be increased so that the pedagogical advisor has more one-on-one interactions with students. 	<i>Essential</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The English Department should be recognized as the unit responsible for training English teachers. It should have administrative support, which would allow it to collect department-specific data, communicate directly with the staff and students, and establish communication with alumni. 	<i>Essential</i>

3. Infrastructure

Observations and findings

The faculty are dedicated to the college and its students. It is evident that they keep up with the current trends in the field. However, their professional practice and engagement in the field is constrained by the lack of office space in the College. Faculty only share a teacher's room and have no space to collaborate on research or meet with students for conferencing/feedback.

<u>Recommendations</u>	<u>Essential/Important/Desirable</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office space should be made available for faculty members. 	Important

Chapter 4: Summary of Recommendations

Essential

- The English Department should add an additional course on second language acquisition and multilingualism to prepare English language teachers to work with the diverse student population.
- The link between the literary studies and pedagogy training should be made explicit to students, and methodologies for teaching literature to different age students should be included in the literature course.
- Content relating to assessment, specific methodologies about reading, writing, speaking should be included in courses.
- Methodology in the two tracks (elementary and junior high) should be differentiated to reflect developmental differences between younger and older children. Offering a single and double major provides an opportunity to strengthen and clarify the goals of each track.
- 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
- Practical training and classroom observations should begin earlier with the observation of different classrooms.
- The English department should have responsibility for practice teaching and the number of pedagogical advisors should be increased so that the pedagogical advisor has more one-on-one interactions.
- The English Department should be recognized as the unit responsible for training English teachers. It should have administrative support, which would allow it to collect department-specific data, communicate directly with the staff and students, and establish communication with alumni.

Important

- Another course in oral proficiency in the third year should be added.

- At least some of the education courses should be taught in English.
- For those planning to teach at secondary level, a single major should be offered.
- The literature curriculum should be made relevant to teacher preparation by including strategies and techniques for teaching English literature.
- Course readings should be up-to-date.
- Office space should be made available for faculty members.

Signed by:



Prof. Claude Goldenberg
Committee Chair



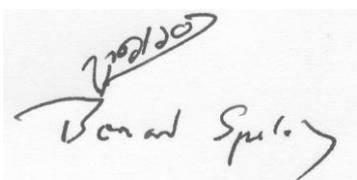
Prof. R. Malatesha (Malt) Joshi
Committee Co-chair



Prof. Janina Brutt-Griffler



Prof. Charlene Rivera



Prof. Bernard Spolsky

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.

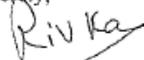
It is with great pleasure that I hereby appoint you to serve as chair of the Council for Higher Education's Committee for the Evaluation of the study programs in **English Teacher Education**. In addition to yourself, the composition of the Committee will be as follows: Prof. Janina Brutt-Griffler, prof. 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

English Teacher Education - Schedule of site visit

Orot College

23.05.17, location- Meeting room next to the President's office.

09:30-10:15	Opening session with the heads of the institution	President- Prof. Yuval Sinai Rector - Prof. Yisrael Rich Chief Executive Officer (CEO)- Dr. Shimon Weiss Academic Dean- Rabbi Dr. Moshe Rachimi- Dean of Students- Rabbanit Dr. Leah Wiesel
10:15-11:00	Meeting with the Head of the Study program	Dr. Vitela Arzi
11:00-11:10	Break	
11:10-11:55	Meeting with senior academic staff * (up to 8)	
12:00-12:40	Meeting with pedagogical instructor* (up to 8)	
12:40- 13:25	Lunch (in the same room)	Closed-door meeting of the committee
13:25-14:15	Open slot	
14:15-15:00	Meeting with BA students** (up to 6)	
15:00-15:45	Meeting with Alumni** (up to 6)	
15:45-16:05	Closed-door meeting of the committee	
16:05-16:30	Closing meeting with the heads of the institutions and the head of the study program	President- Prof. Yuval Sinai Rector - Prof. Yisrael Rich Chief Executive Officer (CEO)- Dr. Shimon Weiss Academic Dean- Rabbi Dr. Moshe Rachimi- Dean of Students- Rabbanit Dr. Leah Wiesel Dr. Vitela Arzi- Head of the Study Program