

B08

Thomas Carole

From tension to synergy – the Bilkent experience

Bilkent University School of English Language (BUSEL) has recently completed the final stages of a 3 year project which linked the in-house proficiency exam (COPE) to the CEFR at B2 level. The COPE linking project has had a far broader impact than originally anticipated, not only in terms of enhancing the validity of the exam but also the extent to which it has raised awareness of the desired language levels in the school. This work in progress will describe the follow-up work to the COPE CEFR linking project, which aims to train all of the teachers in the school in terms of the CEFR and how it relates to BUSEL levels. This project was started in October 2008 with 16 teachers, teaching at the exit level which is when COPE is administered. Before commencing, data was gathered regarding their knowledge of the COPE exam and their perceptions of the level. Training, closely following the guidelines in the Manual for linking exams to the CEFR was given, and teachers were taught to evaluate their students in terms of the CEFR. This data was correlated with the actual COPE scores in January 2009. The results with the initial group of teachers at the end of the first stage of this project are most promising and the intention is to involve students in a similar process, thus making the COPE exam more transparent and thereby reducing some of the inherent tension that exists among different stakeholders when high stakes testing is involved.