

TeachingEnglish

Partnered Remote Language Improvement (PRELIM) project report

Rose Aylett and Martyn Clarke



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He has managed a number of overseas education projects at local and national levels and was the Director of Operations for a group of language schools in the UK and Ireland. He is a co-author of the EAQUALS Academic Management Competency Framework.

He is an affiliate trainer for the Norwich Institute for Language Education (NILE) and the module leader for the MA course in Academic Management in Language Education, and together with Rose Aylett, managed the PRELIM project on behalf of NILE.

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Executive summary

The Partnered Remote Language Improvement (PRELIM) project was conceived and funded by British Council English for Education Systems under the leadership of Roy Cross, Principal Consultant, Partnerships.

The aims of the project were threefold:

- To increase the language proficiency and professional confidence in using English in the classroom among teachers worldwide
- To foster and support partnerships between teachers, English Teacher Associations and English UK member schools
- To create opportunity for increased global contextual awareness and teacher training capacity of English UK members, and to build a sustainable community of practice among them

At the overarching organisational level, PRELIM brought together British Council, IATEFL and English UK as coordinating bodies, who developed the project strategy and supported its implementation and evaluation. Norwich Institute for Language Education (NILE) were brought in as managing consultants to coordinate the 20 partnered projects and develop the UK schools' Community of Practice (CoP).

Invitations to be involved were issued to English Teachers Associations in countries worldwide eligible for Official Development Assistance (ODA), and to English UK members, and a selection process identified 20 partnerships, which began in November 2020.

In the first phase, each partnership of an English UK member school and an English Teacher Association worked on developing contextual understanding, identifying teacher participants and planning a remote language development course for teachers. Each project and course model (both in terms of content and mode) was different, and emerged organically from these 20 collaborations, tailored to the local needs, infrastructure and ambitions of the participants.

From January to March 2021, the 20 courses were run by the English UK schools, with support from their ETA partners, to a total of over 3,000 teachers across the 20 countries.

A final evaluation stage collated project reports from each partnership, and the project's conclusion was celebrated with closing ceremonies and video testimonials involving hundreds of the participants. The stories and experiences shared from the PRELIM project participants were moving, rewarding and full of the genuine expression of professional development among all parties, underlining the successful achievement of the aims set out at the inception of the project.

This report was compiled by NILE as a summary of the main findings of the 20 reports from the individual PRELIM projects (See Appendix 1). In doing so, NILE have tried to represent both the variety of experiences across the different partnerships and those which were shared.

1

Project overview

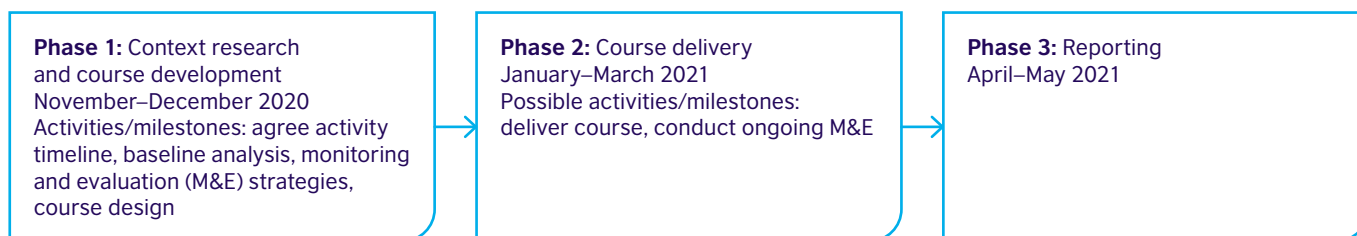
The PRELIM project is a unique initiative, supporting the development of over 3,000 English language teachers across the world. Supported by English UK, the British Council and IATEFL, 17 UK Language Institutes worked in partnerships with 20 English Teacher Associations (ETAs) in ODA countries to deliver tailor-made online courses seeking to raise teachers' confidence in the English language classroom.

1.1 Project partners

Main project partners		British Council, International Association Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL), English UK
Project Management		Norwich Institute for Language Education (NILE)
Region	Country Projects	
South Asia	Afghanistan	English Language Teachers Association of Afghanistan (ELTAA) The University of Sheffield, English Language Teaching Centre, UK (Sheffield)
	Bangladesh	Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association (BELTA) New College Group, UK (NCG)
	Pakistan	Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers (SPELT) Oxford International Education Group – EFL, UK (OIEG)
	India	Association of English Teachers (AINET) International House London, UK (IH London)
Sub-Saharan Africa	Cameroon	Cameroon Bilingual Teachers Association (CABITA) CELT Centre for English Language Teaching, Cardiff, UK (CELT)
	Cote D'Ivoire	Cote d'Ivoire Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (CINELTA) International House London, UK (IH London)
	Guinea Bissau	English Language Teaching Association – Guinea Bissau (ELTAGB) Inlingua, Cheltenham, UK (Inlingua)
	Zambia	Language Teachers Association of Zambia (LATAZ) Celtic English Academy, UK (Celtic)
Wider Europe/ Central Asia	Georgia	English Teachers' Association of Georgia (ETAG) Languages United Ltd, UK (Languages Utd)
	Serbia	English Language Teachers' Association, Serbia (ELTA Serbia) Bell Educational Services Ltd, UK (Bell)
	Uzbekistan	Uzbekistan Teachers of English Association (UzTEA) Centre for English Studies, UK (CES)

East Asia	Indonesia	The Association for the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia (TEFLIN) The University of Sheffield, English Language Teaching Centre, UK (Sheffield)
	Thailand	Thailand TESOL (ThaiTESOL) LILA*, Liverpool, UK (LILA*)
	Vietnam	Vietnam Association for English Language Teaching and Research (VietTESOL) Wimbledon School of English, UK (WSE)
Middle East and North Africa	Palestine	The Palestinian Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (PATEFL) Peartree Languages, UK (Peartree)
Americas	Argentina	Asociación de Profesores de Inglés de Buenos Aires (APIBA) Asociación Cordobesa de Profesores de Inglés (ACPI) St Clare's, Oxford, UK (St Clare's)
	Brazil	BRAZ-TESOL Public School SIG (BRAZ-TESOL) Bell Educational Services Ltd, UK (Bell)
	Cuba	English Language Teaching section of the Cuban Association of Pedagogues (APC-ELI) International House Bristol, UK (IH Bristol)
	Honduras	Honduran English Language Teachers Association (HELTA-TESOL) Lewis School of English, UK (Lewis School)
	Nicaragua	Asociación Nicaraguense de Profesores de Inglés (ANPI) Anglia Ruskin University, UK (ARU)

1.2 Project timeline



1.3 Courses overview

Indicative content	English for the teacher, local syllabus topics, language and culture, ELT methodology
Delivery platforms	Asynchronous: Edmodo, WhatsApp, Google Docs, WordPress, Padlet, Facebook Synchronous: Webex, Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom Communications: Telegram, Facebook, WhatsApp, Edmodo
Course structure	Single courses from 8 to 12 weeks Simultaneous cohorts from 8 to 12 weeks Separate courses (2 x 5 weeks)
Course participants (CPs)	All sectors – from primary to tertiary Mainly English language teachers (some other subject teachers) Between 19–1,500 CPs on different country projects 3,500 CPs across all projects (approximately) 57 female; 43 male (approximately)

2

Project areas: findings

2.1 Working in partnership

Partnerships are at the heart of PRELIM, and Phase 1 focused on the development of the relationships between the UK institutions and the teacher associations as they worked to identify the key features of the context, the target course participants, and the considerations for the course design and delivery. Although different levels of engagement and interaction were evident, there is considerable unanimity in strategies for success across the projects.

This was a new way of working for almost all the stakeholders and so the *'roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined from the outset'*, along with the establishment of *'realistic timeframes ... for each stage of the process'* (Lewis School/HELTA). Clarity of responsibilities within the partnership was especially useful in the early stages of the project in the organisation and implementation of needs analysis and diagnostics, perhaps even more so given the relatively short time available for these key activities. In addition, a clear model of responsibilities facilitated the capacity for flexibility as a *'detailed joint scoping allows adjustments to be made according to local context also managing expectations and recognising the constraints and limitations of delivery'* (ARU/ANPI). Given the variety of contextual unknowns, *'there needs to be room for movement'* (WSE/VietTESOL). This flexibility included the use of different communication platforms, compromises on meeting times between time zones, and engaging with the challenges in some contexts of internet accessibility and availability of personnel (by, for example, *'agreeing that if two out of four of the core (ETA) group are in attendance (there would be) provisional acceptance with internal capital discussion to ratify'* (CELT/CABITA).

Managing expectations was also a key stage of the relationship development between the project partners on both sides. A number of UK institutions reported how they needed to review their plans when learning more about the nature of the context – especially in terms of internet accessibility and language levels, and for the ETAs expectations that the courses would be methodology-focused needed to be addressed. That these initial negotiations in

every case led to an increased bonding is a testament to the importance of the processes described above.

The project itself was able to respond with agility to the realities of the contexts as more was learned. When it became clear that the cost of data in some of the country projects was going to be a prohibitive factor to participation, a 'Connectivity Fund' was organised and the partnerships made applications for additional funding to be distributed to the CPs where this was appropriate. Ten of the 20 projects received the requested funding of between £500 and £2,000.

Underpinning these more strategic practices, however, is how attitudes of professional respect and collegiality supported the success of the individual projects and PRELIM in general, as is evidenced by the many testimonies found in the individual reports, of which the following are representative:

ETAG has gained a valuable partner. I believe that this collaboration will continue (fingers crossed for this). (Languages Utd/ETAG)

Our partners, St Clare's, were very responsive to our needs and took pains to inquire deeply into our educational context and the teachers we would be targeting. (St Clare's/APIBA/ACPI)

In addition to the UK institution and the ETA, other stakeholders that were included in partnerships by different projects were pedagogical advisers, Ministries of Education and local British Council offices, whose roles are detailed below and in the individual reports. Where the partnerships included these other parties, the projects benefitted through support in identifying participants and encouraging their participation, providing additional contextual information, and providing local publicity and communications for the PRELIM initiative.

2.2 Working within the CoP

The community of practice (CoP) was a forum of peer support for the UK providers. Managed and facilitated by NILE, it used the Slack platform for PRELIM communications, Google Docs for information storage and Zoom for group meetings.

It had three main purposes:

- PRELIM information sharing: *'pathways for fulfilling project and regulatory requirements, such as reporting and participation agreements, in the form of template documents, reminders and strategy suggestions'* (IH Bristol)
- Forums for sharing good practice: *'the CoP in fact provided an opportunity to collaborate and share ideas in regular and meaningful ways'* (Lewis School)
- Collegial support: *'There was a definite sense of community ... and members seemed to feel that they were supported or felt they had the opportunity to seek support from other members'* (NCG)

'It was helpful to understand how each project was proceeding, and what considerations, priorities and expectations had been laid out by all parties' (CES)

2.2.1 Slack

Most communication was conducted on the Slack platform, which provided a means of communication within the group, via threads that could be categorised into channels for the different aspects of the project, e.g. #evaluation, #project management, #course design, etc.

As illustrated in Figure 1, the peer support was highly responsive, and the individual reports identify numerous examples of practical strategies and activities that came from this forum. Of course, levels of engagement varied during the project process. They were at their highest during initial context research and course design stages, lower during the initial period of course delivery, and picked up again when evaluation stages began.

For the PRELIM project as a whole the Slack platform provided an invaluable means of internal communications. It became a channel for questions and responses between the project sponsors and the country project partners, and allowed the NILE project management team to mediate and share information as the need arose.

These interactions had a tangible impact on project outcomes and *'the partnerships formed within the CoP, predominantly through the regular meetings held, helped to shape the course into something greater than its initial content'* (LILA*).

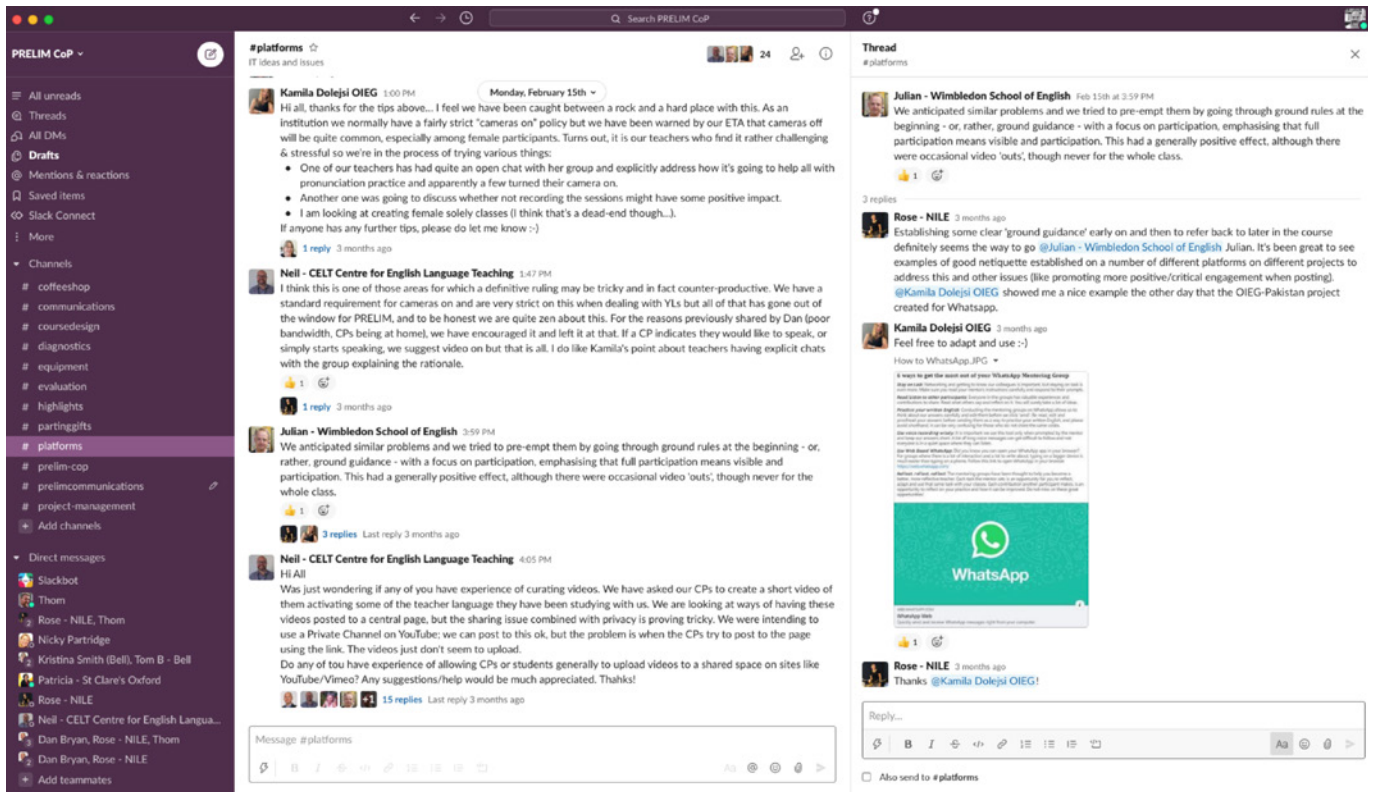


Figure 1: A CoP Slack interaction

2.2.2 Zoom

In addition to the continuous interactions on the Slack platform, there were periodic Zoom sessions for the whole CoP where specific areas were discussed:

1. Zoom for larger groups
2. Working with mixed competence groups
3. Using WhatsApp
4. Creating sustainability
5. Asynchronous tasks
6. Maintaining CP engagement (strategies/ETA role, etc.)
7. Monitoring and Evaluation: When and how
8. Monitoring and Evaluation: Stakeholders and tools

These topics were identified by analysing the Slack channels and were 'a huge support happening at just the right time to focus on the relevant issues' (NCG). This 'excellent forum for discussion and sharing of ideas especially when working in smaller groups' (ARU) was supported by a system of using shared Google Docs, which allowed the discussions in the breakout rooms to be minuted by the CoP members to create synchronously co-constructed records of questions and suggestions for later reference.

This proved an effective strategy, not only for ideas generation and awareness raising (*'the online discussion sessions (and resulting documents) were very useful generating lots of ideas and also raising considerations that I, certainly, had not thought of before'* (CELT)), but also for creating a sense of shared experience that *'is highly beneficial in building the community and trust required for online collaboration on a complex and potentially stressful project such as PRELIM'* (IH Bristol).

Essentially, the members of the CoP were free to use of the support of the community as they felt appropriate – *'sometimes it was simple reassurance as regards timeframes which was valuable, other times it was direct advice from a provider in a similar situation, or as simple as sharing a document template'* (WSE); sometimes it was *'satisfying curiosity as to what was happening elsewhere around the world'* (IH London). Whatever the need brought to the CoP, it's probably true to say *'there was a definite sense of community ... and members seemed to feel that they were supported or felt they had the opportunity to seek support from other members'* (NCG).

2.3 Working with the course participants

2.3.1 Positivity

As can be seen in the individual reports, the experience of working with the course participants was an overwhelmingly positive one. The levels of commitment to the courses, in spite of the sometimes-considerable difficulties brought by accessibility and availability, were commendable.

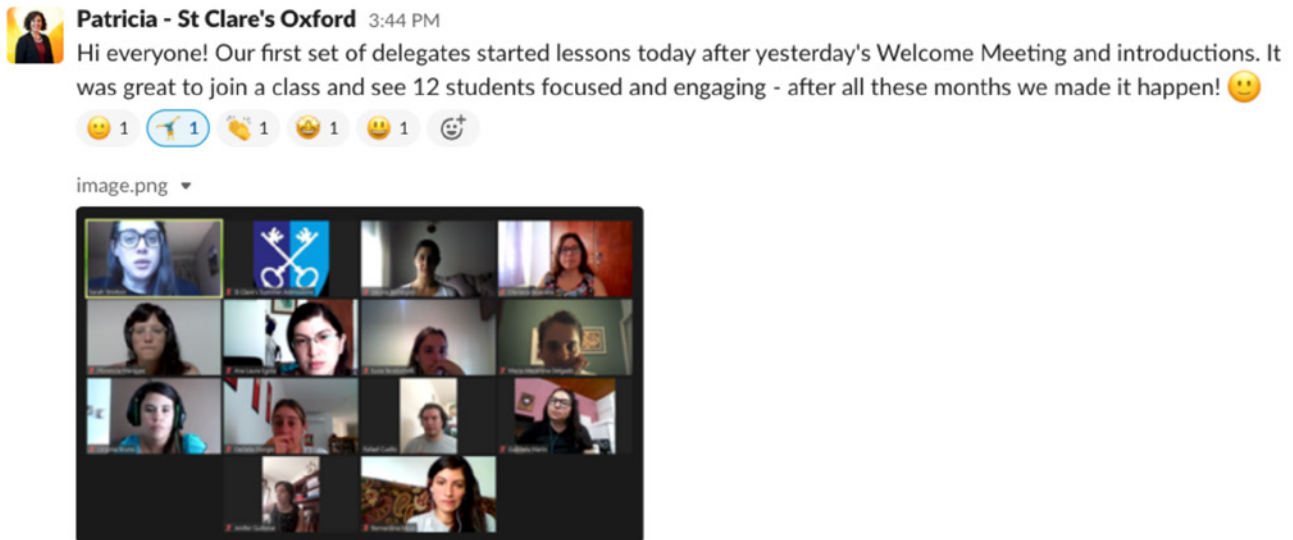


Figure 2: A course begins in Argentina

Many responded with great imagination and engagement.

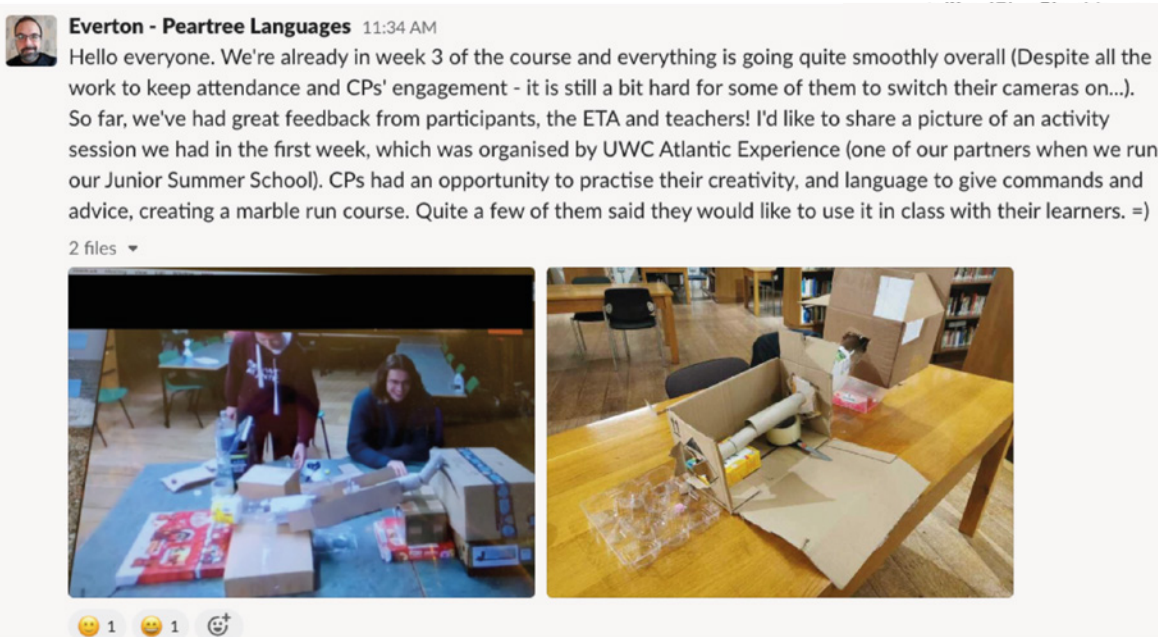


Figure 3: Making marble runs in Palestine

Sometimes, working with the CPs simply made the world a better place.



Figure 4: A virtual Carnival

Many projects identified ways that the experience was improved both by and for the CPs.

2.3.2 Expectations

Inevitably, CPs brought expectations to the course which were not always realistic. These ranged from content to the amount of face-to-face tutor support, and many of the project reports identified the importance of clarifying expectations of CPs early on, in order to *'ensure a positive understanding of the scope and type of provision they will receive'* (ARU/ANPI). A point of learning for many of the projects is that this might be best identified with the ETA partner with clarity at the recruitment stage, before the course begins.

2.3.3 Learner training

Linked to this area of expectations, a number of projects raised the importance of early learner support for the use of whatever platforms or technologies might be used. *'For future projects of this kind, we would recommend including induction videos in both English and the CPs' L1, which clearly explain the format of the course and demonstrate the online tools used'* (Lewis School/HELTA). In some cases, teaching and learning approaches needed development support and tutors *'needed to use the first few sessions 'training' the CPs to be communicative learners themselves'* (IH London/CINELTA). Across the board, where possible the projects which were able to include some form of induction session for the CPs before the course started found this to be highly recommended. In addition, it would be useful to *'build in 'orientation' time between welcome webinar and the course start date to allow time for CPs to join social media groups, etc.'* (Bell/BRAZ-TESOL).

2.3.4 Encouraging participation

Along with the noticeable commitment of many of the CPs, many of the projects acknowledged that the *numbers* of participants tended to drop off over the course. A number of reasons have been identified for this, including the beginnings of school semesters, changes to work timetables, difficulties in internet access, etc. This issue became the focus of a CoP session and a number of strategies can be recommended:

1. Maintain a high level of provider engagement in the early part of the course:

'We saw an increase in participation when teachers made use of WhatsApp with weekly reminders, videos and informal exchanges' (Lewis School/HELTA)

'Ensure robust interaction in the four class WhatsApp groups, particularly in the first month of the course' (IH Bristol/APC-ELI)

2. Involve a number of stakeholders:

'The use of local mentors was vital in maintaining communication and keeping the tone of the course, and adequate time should be spent on induction/training for these key roles' (Bell/BRAZ-TESOL)

'A learning contract was developed by CABITA – this along with additional support and encouraging participation was very valuable' (CELT/CABITA)

'The engagement of the Ministry of Education with the project ... allowed us to onboard a large number of participants successfully. Detailed CP lists were supplied by MINED and appropriate arrangements made to allow CPs to attend live sessions' (ARU/ANPI)

'A useful strategy was giving AINET access to our registers so they could follow up and contact non-attendees' (IH London/AINET)

3. Allow for a variety of communication channels:

'Ensure potential participants have access to varied ways to sign up to the course to increase overall project enrolment, potentially by including local school supervisors from the start (of the project)'

'Divide participants into different groups as per preferred communication channels' (Peartree/PATEFL)

4. Reduce learning stress and enhance success:

'We suggest implementing a small win approach by inviting CPs to share single ideas activities or experiences, etc.' (ARU/ANPI)

'We set out to create a warm, caring atmosphere so that teachers would lose their shyness. For example, one of the first activities on Telegram was to share a favourite English word' (Bell/BRAZ-TESOL)

'For courses aimed at CPs with low English levels and low confidence, initial communication in L1 avoids barriers to participation' (Languages Utd/ETAG)

2.4 Designing/delivering the course

2.4.1 Diagnostics

The importance of the initial context research and diagnostics has already been noted in relation to the building of the working partnerships on the projects, the management of expectations and the facility with which participants were recruited. But the research activities of this stage were also the basis upon which the courses were designed.

Although placement testing was carried out in some projects, most investigations in the area of course content were in terms of diagnostic profiling (e.g. what levels/ages do they teach? How do the teachers use English in the lesson? What are they least confident about? What level would they consider themselves to be? etc.) In general, there was a feeling that placement tests tend to focus solely on declarative grammar and vocabulary knowledge at the lower levels, which is not going to be the focus of a course which develops teacher confidence in the classroom. Some projects relied on a self-rated level of English, but this is 'not always a reliable indicator of actual level ... based on this small sample, there is a tendency for teachers to under-rate their English level' (NCG/BELTA).

One successful approach here was for CPs to write about their own expectations for the course. One project, for example, found that *'participants used a lot of idioms and had a rather formal and descriptive way of expressing themselves. This helped guide the course content towards encouraging the participants to use more natural English'* (Celtic/LATAZ). This, together with an exploration of the *'factors that affect confidence in using English'* (NCG/BELTA) formed the base of the diagnostics.

In addition to identifying language and content focus, the partners also stress the importance of sharing information on:

1. Key demographic information about possible CPs (e.g. rural/urban, gender, age of students taught, etc.)
2. Working patterns and availability for both synchronous and asynchronous engagement along with anticipated amount of commitment levels
3. Technical information (e.g. CPs' smartphone operating systems, 3G/4G access and internet costs, preferred platforms, messaging/social media platforms, etc.)
4. Expertise and comfort with digital working
5. Previous experience of CPD activities

For many UK providers this analysis stage within the PRELIM project offered a new perspective on course preparation. *'Normally, students come to us and they join us. But PRELIM is us going to them'* (Lewis School/HELTA). This was the reality for all the projects and the levels of flexibility required has become one of the key features of the PRELIM success noted by all involved. *'A difference was starting with the certainty of the outcomes. Our uncertainty was how to reach them. Initially, PRELIM was almost defined by what we didn't know. This made it ok – essential, even, for everyone to ask lots of questions'* (LILA*/ThaiTESOL). The impact this has had on a number of the UK institutions is described below.

2.4.2 Selection of platforms

The individual reports identify the rationale for the choices made in selecting delivery platforms. In Uzbekistan, for example, *'the sheer volume of potential participants ... (led to the requirement) that the course would be purely asynchronous self-study content with a light-touch tutoring'* (CES/UTEA). In Guinea-Bissau, due to *'connection problems, limited electricity supply ... (and the fact that) ELTA-GB had already been making use of WhatsApp to provide CPD to teachers remotely'* (Inlingua/ELTA-GB) meant that WhatsApp became the obvious choice.

In some contexts, a range of platforms were preferable – *'we are delivering the synchronous live content as one-to-one tutorials and the rest is asynchronous groups on WhatsApp (with emphasis on the voice recording function for oral work) and Google Docs for written work, along with mobile friendly off-line tasks on a website for self-study'* (Sheffield/ELTAA).

As noted elsewhere in this report, the raised awareness and competence of a range of remote digital learning platforms and tools for the project partners and the CPs themselves was a key outcome.

2.4.3 Emergent course design

As mentioned above, all projects relied on flexibility towards course design and delivery to best serve the outcomes of the project. This was apparent in a number of different areas.

Access to internet and hardware

Where internet availability was not guaranteed, making attendance at live sessions unpredictable, solutions included offering classes on different days and at different times, providing catch-up sessions, and recording classes to them available online.

'As CPs' circumstances changed during the course, e.g. returning to F2F teaching and no longer having a laptop to work on at home, the teachers adapted the delivery to allow for audio-only attendance' (Languages Utd/ETAG). The range of platforms and tools described in the individual reports certainly suggest that *'where internet accessibility is still very limited – a remote language course for teachers is possible thanks to tools like WhatsApp, and can be of great benefit'* (Inlingua/ELTA-GB).

Appropriateness of course content and processes

Negotiation: In addition to responding to the initial analysis carried out in Phase 1, many projects found it useful to take a more negotiated approach to content during the course itself, which *'motivated the participants by giving them direct influence in the course content and led to participant engagement in lessons'* (Celtic/LATAZ). This ongoing participant contribution was enabled during live sessions, one-to-one meetings – *'as the teachers developed a better understanding of the CPs' teaching context, through mentoring, it became apparent that some of the looped input being provided was less relevant'* (Languages Utd/ETAG) – and sometimes through innovative digital options inviting CPs *'to select from a menu of possibilities'* (CELT/CABITA).

Language and methodology: The most frequent area for negotiation was the balance between language improvement and methodology development. Many projects report that the expectation on the part of both the ETA partners and the CPs was that there would be a focus on methodology, and that acknowledging this, along with the PRELIM intention to raise teacher confidence through improved classroom language competence, was an important contributor to project engagement. The perspective shared by many was that *'a language improvement course aimed at teachers cannot and should not be detached from methodology – both aspects reinforce and strengthen the other'* (Bell/BRAZ-TESOL).

This recognises the fact that it is probably unrealistic to *'separate being a teacher from being a learner; they will always be wearing both hats, so all courses need to include explicit reflection and exploration of task, topic and theory'* (IH London/CINELTA). Indeed, methodology as content sometimes proved to be unavoidable when *'interactive tasks were well received, but the group chat became a forum for discussing the teaching ideas rather than a class actually doing the tasks'* (Inlingua/ELTA-GB), and where *'most of the English for teaching language input and a lot of the mentoring hours resulted in discussions of methodology'* (OIEG/SPELT).

The reports reveal different ways of achieving this combination from *'the inclusion of methodology-oriented asynchronous projects and use of weekly quizzes alongside the more language-focused activities'* (LILA*/ThaiTESOL), to *'using the course material as a springboard for discussion and, while still delivering the class material, then allowing time for analysing the activities and approaches that they had used'* (IH London/AINET). As can be seen from the CP evaluations below, this was a very useful development during the project.

Culture: An extremely gratifying feature of PRELIM is the way the project interactions and partnerships have enhanced awareness of different cultural contexts and an appreciation of collegiality between educational professionals across them. The realisation that *'The best thing by far was meeting this wonderful group of people and their generosity in sharing their thoughts and opinions on all and every topic'* (Celtic/LATAZ) is one shared across many of the projects. In Vietnam, for example, *'The course participants seem to engage most with more cultural topics, especially when asked to describe what people generally do during Tet'* (WSE/VietTESOL). As the reports highlight, links were discovered, such as the shared mining traditions of Wales and Zambia; skills were shared such as British scone-baking and Brazilian Carnival costume-making; and images and details of the daily lives of both tutors and CPs became one of the key takeaways for many of the project participants. This aspect of development occurred within the process of the courses themselves as the shared input formed the basis of both language and methodology activities, but it was also an outcome of the more non-academic interactions. The latter was highly motivational for everyone involved and many have pointed out its importance in defining the overall experience of PRELIM. The recommendation to *'make space for social media interaction between tutors and participants and encourage it to build trust and rapport, build this into course planning'* (Bell/BRAZTESOL) is shared across all the projects. For some, WhatsApp was *'key to creating rapport within the groups ... (as it) led to instant and responsive interactions, peer support and low-pressure opportunities to practise using English. It was also an opportunity for cultural exchanges, as our teachers indirectly gained insights into life in Honduras, and the CPs learned about our teachers' UK experiences'* (Lewis School/HELTA). Elsewhere *'the overwhelming majority of cultural awareness raising activities – in both directions – was facilitated through Facebook. The closed group was the non-academic content forum for sharing, predominantly YouTube links and photos'* (Languages Utd/ETAG).

2.5 Course outcomes

2.5.1. Outcomes for course participants

(a) Language confidence

The feedback shared in the course outcome sections of the individual reports evidence the impact that the PRELIM experience has had on the language confidence of those involved. Of note is that expectations of language *improvement* are probably misplaced, and given the short courses that were the PRELIM projects, this is not surprising. This is worth bearing in mind when considering the objective of language confidence. As noted by many of the CPs, the opportunity to interact in English outside of the classroom is limited in a number of the contexts of the participating professionals. Indeed, as a participant in Brazil shared, *'this is the first time I've spoken in English with someone'*. The creation of an English-speaking online community, even one as relatively short-lived as the PRELIM course (although see below for sustainable initiatives), provided the chance to experience communication in a safe environment. For some this had a tangible impact on their classroom practice. A Georgian teacher explained that *'I try to speak more English during the lesson, I give students instructions in English, I advise them to try to ask their questions in English and if they can't, I help them to translate their questions'*. This suggests that on short courses, language confidence is more effectively supported through attitudinal shifts rather than level improvement. In Cameroon, for example, a teacher asserted that *'I am no more stressed as before; I was scared of making mistakes in front of my students. Thanks to the course, I feel more confident and can teach a whole lesson without using French.'* If this is the case, and the evidence in the reports appears to suggest it is, then the environment of supportive partnership created by the UK institution, the English Teacher Association and the participants has a key role to play in this affective learning. When a Cameroon participant shares that *'there wasn't a lesson we had that we didn't end up laughing'*, this is not just about having a good time, but is indicative of a confidence-building learning community, even where it was a first-time experience – *'highlights from Indonesia so far has been that fact so many have commented on how good it is to speak to UK-based teachers, but more importantly with teachers all over their own country for the first time ever!'* (Sheffield/TEFLIN).

(b) Methodology confidence

We have noted the weaving of methodology exploration into many of the courses. Numerous CPs disclose shifts in their professional confidence as a result. When Pakistan teachers *'start to ask more questions and open up more about their bad teaching experiences or when things did not go to plan'* and increasingly *'ask why we do things a certain way'* (OIEG/SPELT), this suggests that within a short space of time it is possible to encourage comfort with the uncertainty that underpins reflective professional practice. A focus on activities which promote fluency and positive encouragement on the courses is recommended in a number of the reports and it is argued that *'experiencing this approach inspired participants to view their own teaching differently and work with learners in new ways'* (Bell/BRAZ-TESOL). The effectiveness of this experiential learning is suggested by comments such as this from a Thai teacher – *'I will think and create my lesson to my students fun and don't make them afraid of mistaking in using English.'* The focus on awareness of affective learning revealed here is echoed by the teacher in Palestine who asserts, *'I have to include my students' reaction, my concerns about implementing different activities and how I can handle them in other situations.'*

The reference here to the impact that the PRELIM experience is having on current classes is a noticeable theme of the feedback from the CPs. One strength of remote courses, which became apparent for many of the project partners, is that they can occur alongside actual teaching practice, opening up the possibilities for minor informal action research, or at least active experimentation and reflection. In India for example, a teacher reported that *'my favourite part of the course was sharing the ideas and activities that each teacher has done in the following class'*. New approaches to supporting students with their writing were tried in a classroom in Georgia – *'I had problems with my student when they had testing they didn't use to write small simple essay. They used to leave this place empty. With the help of this course, they began to write step by step; now I know how to simplify task for them.'*

(c) Digital learning

The variety of technologies and platforms used across PRELIM was not simply a means of project delivery. For many CPs, the experience of learning in these ways brought them new possibilities for their own classes:

The use of new technology and teaching platforms was also one of the successes of this course with participants embracing the use of many new applications, realising that a blended learning approach is the future of teaching (Peartree/PATEFL)

It's the opportunity to learn by using learning online and everybody can share the idea, can work together and get the new methods to teach the students and share the knowledge to my teachers at my school (CP, LILA/ThaiTESOL)*

Some of the CPs started presenting their written assignments as slide presentations, which shows not only confidence in the language, but also with technology (WSE/VietTESOL)

(d) Sustainability

Although not an explicit intended outcome for PRELIM, the nature of the projects naturally led to discussions between the partners and within the CoP as to how sustainability might be encouraged. A number of strategies have been instigated which are described in detail in the reports.

1. WhatsApp and Facebook groups created for the project have been maintained by ETAs and CPs in order to share ideas and materials (e.g. Cameroon, Cote D'Ivoire, Zambia)
2. In some cases, the course materials have been handed over to the ETA for their own use with members (e.g. Honduras, Palestine)
3. Relationships have developed between some UK institutions and other partner organisations within the ETA countries with future collaborations being planned (e.g. Vietnam, Thailand, Guinea Bissau)

I am so proud to say that this is my first school padlet.
To be honest, I didn't know about this amazing and useful app until Peartree Languages offered it.
Thank you so much ❤️

I am so proud that I had this experience and now I am using it with my astonishing girls at [redacted] prep school.
Thanks so much to my girls for always being eager to learn new things and also to my school principal [redacted] and to her assistant Mrs [redacted] for their constant help and support.
Proud to be a part of this school. ♡

You're invited to take a look about what students did only in one day. We're expecting more in the coming days xx

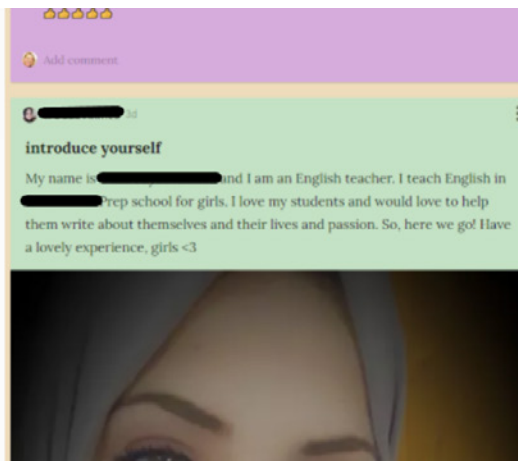


Figure 5: Using IT skills shared on PRELIM in the classroom

2.5.2 Outcomes for English Teacher Associations

In addition to the professional development of their members, the ETAs noted outcomes for their own organisations centred around two areas:

(a) Development of expertise:

PATEFL has mentioned a development in their expertise to handle bigger projects (its promotional and organisational aspects and use of online resources). The digital communities developed intend to keep on engaging Palestinian teachers, developing their language skills in benefit of their classroom environment (Peartree/PATEFL)

This has helped us reach more teachers and enhance our role as professional associations fully committed to the continuous development of their members. We look forward to building on this partnership to strengthen links with all stakeholders in this project, as we are convinced that these cooperative efforts are increasingly successful in achieving the goals of our organisations (St Clare's/APIBA/ACPI)

APC-ELI coordinators said that they learned a great deal about managing and organising online training and served as liaison between the producers of the course and the recipients (IH Bristol/APC-ELI)

I so much appreciate the fact of always requesting my view in important decisions to be taken during the project. This has helped me in being more targeted and objective in my relationship with other participants. And consequently, to create a spirit of professionalism (CELT/CABITA)

(b) Enhanced networking:

During our closing ceremony, Ms Runna Badwan (British Council, Palestine) mentioned the importance of these projects in a segmented country such as Palestine. Many participants from Gaza expressed their pleasure in being able to contact their colleagues from the West Bank. PRELIM has provided the ETA, based in Gaza, with an opportunity to further expand and engage TEFL teachers all over Palestine (Peartree/PATEFL)

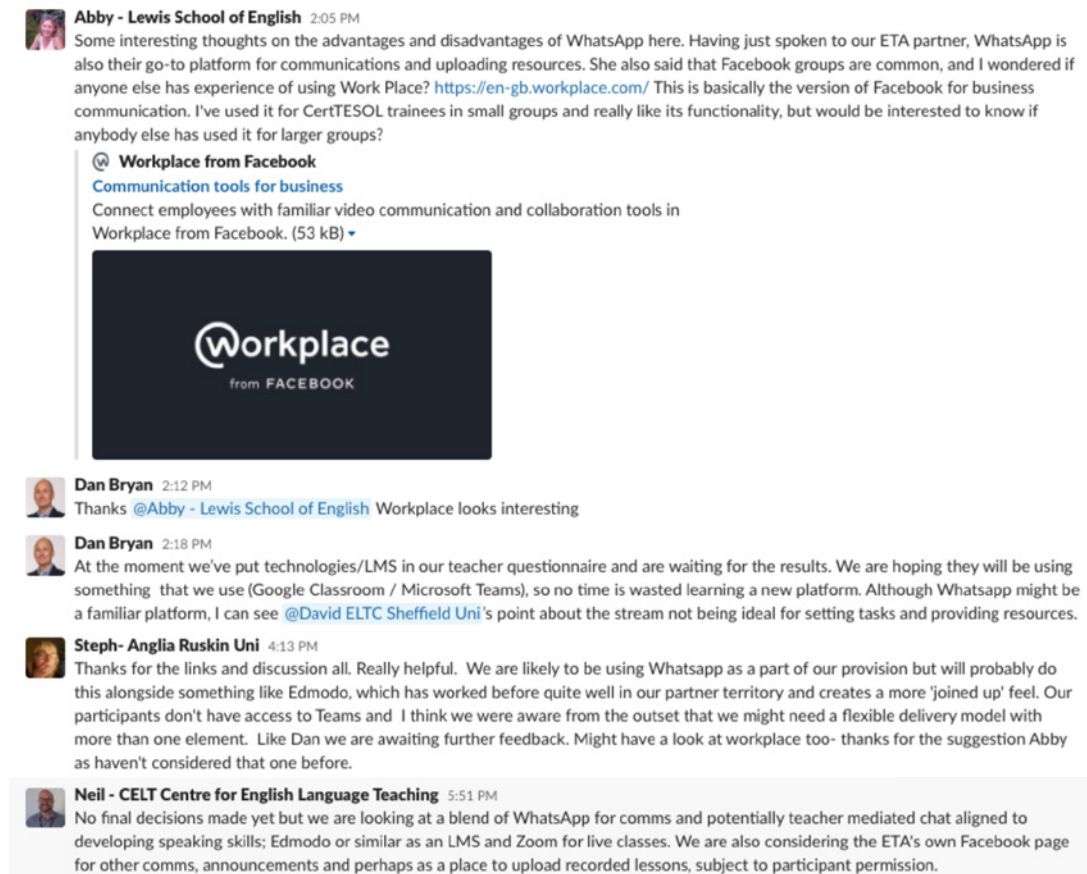
We strongly believe the course outcomes were met and it went beyond the improvement of English proficiency into building a community of practice where teachers felt they were valued and that there was a genuine interest in their learning (Lewis School/HELTA)

2.5.3 Outcomes for UK Institutions

(a) Digital teaching/learning competence

For many of the UK institutions PRELIM provided an opportunity to develop their competence in remote course design and the use of IT tools and platforms. Many of the reports echo the observation that *‘the nature of PRELIM meant our teaching and training staff had to think more deeply about, and become familiar with, many aspects of online learning which they weren’t accustomed to’* (Bell/ELTA Serbia).

As can be seen from Figure 6 below, IT issues, possibilities and solutions were the focus of much discussion within the CoP and was the focus of more than one group meeting. In some cases, the experience of PRELIM has led to additional product development – *‘we have used the lessons learned from PRELIM to create and launch our own self-guided direct learning platform’* (CES/UTEA). Even for providers experienced in international training, the learning was marked – *‘while St Clare’s is adept at teacher training, with experience as an organisation of delivering this online, those designing and delivering the course had never done so before and so the course has boosted our confidence in our own ability to do something new under pressure and deliver it with quality’* (St Clare’s/APIBA/ACPI).



The screenshot shows a Slack channel conversation. At the top, a message from Abby - Lewis School of English (2:05 PM) discusses WhatsApp and Workplace. Below it is a link to Workplace from Facebook. Then, Dan Bryan (2:12 PM) thanks Abby. Another message from Dan Bryan (2:18 PM) discusses LMS technologies. Steph - Anglia Ruskin Uni (4:13 PM) thanks the group. Finally, Neil - CELT Centre for English Language Teaching (5:51 PM) shares their current plans.

Abby - Lewis School of English 2:05 PM
Some interesting thoughts on the advantages and disadvantages of WhatsApp here. Having just spoken to our ETA partner, WhatsApp is also their go-to platform for communications and uploading resources. She also said that Facebook groups are common, and I wondered if anyone else has experience of using Work Place? <https://en-gb.workplace.com/> This is basically the version of Facebook for business communication. I've used it for CertTESOL trainees in small groups and really like its functionality, but would be interested to know if anybody else has used it for larger groups?

Workplace from Facebook
Communication tools for business
Connect employees with familiar video communication and collaboration tools in Workplace from Facebook. (53 kB) ▶

Dan Bryan 2:12 PM
Thanks @Abby - Lewis School of English Workplace looks interesting

Dan Bryan 2:18 PM
At the moment we've put technologies/LMS in our teacher questionnaire and are waiting for the results. We are hoping they will be using something that we use (Google Classroom / Microsoft Teams), so no time is wasted learning a new platform. Although Whatsapp might be a familiar platform, I can see @David ELTC Sheffield Uni's point about the stream not being ideal for setting tasks and providing resources.

Steph - Anglia Ruskin Uni 4:13 PM
Thanks for the links and discussion all. Really helpful. We are likely to be using Whatsapp as a part of our provision but will probably do this alongside something like Edmodo, which has worked before quite well in our partner territory and creates a more 'joined up' feel. Our participants don't have access to Teams and I think we were aware from the outset that we might need a flexible delivery model with more than one element. Like Dan we are awaiting further feedback. Might have a look at workplace too- thanks for the suggestion Abby as haven't considered that one before.

Neil - CELT Centre for English Language Teaching 5:51 PM
No final decisions made yet but we are looking at a blend of WhatsApp for comms and potentially teacher mediated chat aligned to developing speaking skills; Edmodo or similar as an LMS and Zoom for live classes. We are also considering the ETA's own Facebook page for other comms, announcements and perhaps as a place to upload recorded lessons, subject to participant permission.

Figure 6: CoP members share platform ideas on Slack

(b) Teacher development

In addition to providing the opportunity to build IT skills, the UK institutions report that working with CP colleagues led to the need for *'building real reflection on what teachers do and why: for some this was the first time this was explored organically rather than for official assessment/qualification'* (IH London/CINELTA). Similar development processes were noted due to the need for contextual awareness as *'the UK trainers needed to reflect on their own critical pedagogy by uncovering these assumptions and presenting the activities in a more global context, rather than from a UK perspective'* (Languages Utd/ETAG). The collaborative nature of the PRELIM groups within the project is discussed in the following section, but it is evident that the co-construction of the courses within the schools encouraged a developmental experience for the UK tutors involved as it's *'not often that colleagues are delivering the same material and able to bounce ideas around with my peers with regards to how we'd use the materials, and how we could adapt them to suit our participants'* (IHL/AINET).

(c) Project-based approaches and organisational development

For some of the UK Institutions, PRELIM has resulted in the development of new approaches to organisational interactions. These are centred around a shift towards greater collaboration and shared responsibility for task outcomes that often accompany project-based approaches.

As highlighted above, PRELIM was defined by its intended outcomes, and the freedom with which these were achieved at individual project level. This lack of prescription and the initially relatively unknown contexts meant that in designing the process *'all expertise could be important. It's not enough to think something is a good idea – expertise sharing needs to be necessary for it to happen'* (OIEG/SPELT). This required a new way of approaching course design as *'usually a course is designed in advance, and the questions are already answered. In PRELIM we had to be responsive. We had to sense more and collaborate more'* (Lewis School/HELTA). Schools noted a shift in the ways the team self-managed and that *'managerial hierarchy was removed and, despite the difference in roles and experience, the overall tone of the communication was very much peer-to-peer'* (OIEG/SPELT). *'Involving teachers in the course design fostered a sense of collaboration and gave the teachers on the course ownership of the lesson materials'* (Celtic/LATAZ). *'Meetings are not for reporting back.*

They are where experiences are shared and strategies are formulated by the teachers' (Peartree/PATEFL). The ownership of the course design and responsibility for its experience by CP colleagues resulted in skills development as *'the more scope (the teachers) were given, the more they pushed and explored. It was a positive 'give them an inch and they'll take a mile'* (LILA*/ThaiTESOL), as well as the development of their own confidence – *'we have watched them move from teachers to leaders, from teachers with a DoS who knows best, to confident and able teachers who realise that their views, opinions and skills not only matter, but actively improve the course the project is taking'* (LILA*/ThaiTESOL).

The outcomes of this shift in collaborative working are not confined to the PRELIM project. *'A main finding here is the way teachers became more proactive – making suggestions and devising solutions that would benefit their learners more'* (Peartree/PATEFL). PRELIM gave the UK academic managers *'a new confidence in our staff to succeed in a range of initiatives ... as it has been an opportunity to share trust'* (Lewis School/HELTA). As a result, for a number of the UK PRELIM participants, there are plans to *distribute more widely among the teaching staff the managerial functions of future courses and projects'* (LILA*/ThaiTESOL).

2.5.4 Outcomes for NILE

For the NILE project management team, the outcomes of PRELIM are as follows:

- (a) In a multi-agency project such as this, flexibility is needed in how the different partnerships are supported. There was a range of experience in the different aspects of the initiative (e.g. digital learning, emergent course design, limited resource contexts, etc.) and a proactive sensitivity was needed to support effective programmes while maintaining the freedom of the partnerships to engage with the challenges of the local realities. We found that building personal relationships through regular meetings with the UK partners (and on occasion with the ETA partner as well) very much facilitated our understandings of how best to support.
- (b) A key role for the management of this project was the development of the supportive community of practice among the UK partners. The use of Slack and Zoom has already been identified as the tools which enabled this, but we found useful information management activities such as highlighting useful contributions, collating resource links shared on Slack onto a group Google document, creating individual project summary folders and updates for communal sharing, and putting individual projects together for mutual support where appropriate, greatly facilitated the efficacy of the CoP.
- (c) A question that was continually raised for us was the extent to which the CoP should be directed. In its purest sense, a community of practice is created and maintained naturally by its members, and only exists as an expression of their interactions according to their need. In a project such as PRELIM, however, there is an unavoidable element of artificiality in that it is a specifically and deliberately created group. Nevertheless, we took the management approach that engagement through facilitation and encouragement, rather than requirement, was most appropriate to support the various needs and wants of its members. This naturally led to different levels of engagement among the group, but we feel confident that taking this approach maintained a higher quality of contribution and sharing throughout the project.
- (d) An important administrative role was where the project management team provided channels of communication between the project sponsors and the individual projects themselves, both in sharing general project information and organising project-wide activities, such as project timelines or creating press releases, and also in sharing information and learning from the individual projects to the sponsors, which led to project improvements such as the creation of the Connectivity Fund. This is an important function to maintain in a project structure that sees relatively independent initiatives forming the whole.
- (e) On a personal level, the NILE project management team found the experience significantly developmental, as it enabled insights into the working practices of a range of highly effective professional ELT organisations and individuals. Being able to support by sharing reflection-in-action during the projects, and through facilitating reflection-on-action during the evaluation and reporting stages has enhanced our confidence in the commitment to quality shared by the practitioners within the international ELT sector of which we are a part.

Appendix 1

Country reports

Region	Country Projects		Page
South Asia	Afghanistan	English Language Teachers Association of Afghanistan (ELTAA) The University of Sheffield, English Language Teaching Centre, UK (Sheffield)	
	Bangladesh	Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association (BELTA) New College Group, UK (NCG)	
	Pakistan	Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers (SPELT) Oxford International Education Group – EFL, UK (OIEG)	
	India	Association of English Teachers (AINET) International House London, UK (IH London)	
Sub-Saharan Africa	Cameroon	Cameroon Bilingual Teachers Association (CABITA) CELT Centre for English Language Teaching, Cardiff, UK (CELT)	
	Cote D'Ivoire	Cote d'Ivoire Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (CINELTA) International House London, UK (IH London)	
	Guinea Bissau	English Language Teaching Association – Guinea Bissau (ELTAGB) Inlingua, Cheltenham, UK (Inlingua)	
	Zambia	Language Teachers Association of Zambia (LATAZ) Celtic English Academy, UK (Celtic)	
	Georgia	English Teachers' Association of Georgia (ETAG) Languages United Ltd, UK (Languages Utd)	
Wider Europe/ Central Asia	Serbia	English Language Teachers' Association, Serbia (ELTA Serbia) Bell Educational Services Ltd, UK (Bell)	
	Uzbekistan	Uzbekistan Teachers of English Association (UzTEA) Centre for English Studies, UK (CES)	
East Asia	Indonesia	The Association for the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia (TEFLIN) The University of Sheffield, English Language Teaching Centre, UK (Sheffield)	

Middle East and North Africa	Thailand	Thailand TESOL (ThaiTESOL) LILA*, Liverpool, UK (LILA*)	Page
	Vietnam	Vietnam Association for English Language Teaching and Research (VietTESOL) Wimbledon School of English, UK (WSE)	
	Palestine	The Palestinian Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (PATEFL) Peartree Languages, UK (Peartree)	
Americas	Argentina	Asociación de Profesores de Inglés de Buenos Aires (APIBA) Asociación Cordobesa de Profesores de Inglés (ACPI) St Clare's, Oxford, UK (St Clare's)	
	Brazil	BRAZ-TESOL Public School SIG (BRAZ-TESOL) Bell Educational Services Ltd, UK (Bell)	
	Cuba	English Language Teaching section of the Cuban Association of Pedagogues (APC-ELI) International House Bristol, UK (IH Bristol)	
	Honduras	Honduran English Language Teachers Association (HELTATESOL) Lewis School of English, UK (Lewis School)	
	Nicaragua	Asociación Nicaraguense de Profesores de Inglés (ANPI) Anglia Ruskin University, UK (ARU)	

Afghanistan

Project background

1. Description of the partners

The English Language Teachers Association for Afghans (ELTAA) is a non-profit, non-governmental and non-political organisation whose aim is to enhance English Language Teaching (ELT) in Afghanistan. ELTAA was set up in 2006 and run by a small committee of volunteers, with named roles, based mainly in higher education (HE) in the capital Kabul, including the current ELTAA President Nadia Nazeer Hashimi. The main objective behind the establishment of this national teachers' association was to set up a common platform for all teachers of English in Afghanistan. ELTAA offers different activities such as workshops and training events for its members, providing job opportunities, sharing professional development, and creating academic partnerships with other educational centres and organisations. Currently ELTAA has a membership of around 60 individuals and supports a further 50 non-members. The National Ministry of Education in Afghanistan is supportive of this association because ELTAA is working for professional development of English teachers and collaborates with the government and other agencies, working in various areas such as curricula, materials production and teacher training.

The English Language Teaching Centre (ELTC) is a department of the University of Sheffield and is one of the larger university language centres in the UK, with over 200 teachers at peak in the summer (and over 100 year-round) 40-plus administrative, management and support staff. The ELTC teaches and supports over 4,000 students and teachers full- and part-time programmes, both face-to-face/blended in Sheffield and online internationally, with a dedicated Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) team. The Centre works with the student community within the University, external partner organisations, and members of the public (learners and teachers) in the UK and internationally. The range of programmes and services offered at the ELTC is diverse and includes English Language Teaching (ELT), English for Academic Purposes (EAP), Teacher Training and Development, Research Training and Specific Language Differences (SpLD) support. The Centre is accredited by the British Council and BALEAP and is an IELTS and Cambridge English Test and Teacher Training Centre. The ELTC supports the wider community in ELT, globally and locally, with student and teacher scholarships, hosting and sponsoring conferences and events, and volunteering for teaching and committee work for, among others, IATEFL, English UK, BALEAP, St Mary's Community Centre Sheffield and the Campaign for At Risk Academics (CARA).

2. Key features of the context

A total of 36 course participants (CPs) were involved in the project at some stage, from initial interest to full course completion. Most were based in the capital Kabul (28), but others represented different, mainly more urbanised areas, across the country. 15 of the CPs were women and 21 were men and they worked in a range of educational settings: seven in high schools, 11 in higher education and 18 in private institutions (for children and adults). It was also noticeable that many worked across the sectors with multiple jobs, some with employment outside of teaching and some with no or little current work in any sector. 11 of the teachers work in the private sector part-time in addition to their full-time studies at university in English Language, Arts and related subjects. Most of the teachers were academically well qualified with completion (or near completion) of undergraduate studies, with those working in HE often having postgraduate qualifications too. There was a diversity of self-reported language levels from A2 to C1 and this was borne out in the initial spoken and written pre-course assessment. Along with the impact of the ongoing pandemic, a quote from the initial ELTAA application document summarised well the particular background context in Afghanistan. "Like other Afghans, English language teachers have suffered a devastating war which resulted in a huge loss of life, damage to the economy, as well as damage to the teaching of English language as a profession." The impact of this on the project (and any future projects) fell in three main areas: infrastructure, safety and teacher education. A general lack of consistent electricity and internet impacts the day-to-day personal and professional lives of the CPs. It was often not possible for participants to travel to local or regional hubs for face-to-face training or contact due to safety issues, in particular for women. Generally, longer-term regional instability, together with limited opportunities for pre-service teacher education, meant that few of the teachers had any ELT qualifications. ELTAA had been active in the recent past with face-to-face workshops and other training and development activities, mainly centred in Kabul, but this is now more sporadic and has been greatly impacted by the issues outlined above. Despite the challenging circumstances, there is a real desire for and resilience towards education generally and pedagogical development in particular.

3. Outline of the course and rationale

The overall focus for the six-week course (that fitted with the timescales indicated by ELTAA and CPs) was on developing classroom and personal language to build confidence within the specific teaching contexts of course participants. Each of the six weeks had online units delivered on a mobile-friendly, bespoke-designed WordPress website (see example unit and unit themes in Figure 1 with its in-built progress tracking function). This expected CPs to complete seven to eight hours of self-study a week to fit in with their existing work/life commitments, as agreed with ELTAA and analysed from the needs/situational questionnaires and interviews with the CPs in the pre-course design phase. WhatsApp was also used and chosen as the preferred technology platform by the CPs to communicate and provided ongoing engagement and interaction through reflection tasks, external signposting and general course discussions (see examples in Figures 2 and 3). The 36 CPs were split into three WhatsApp community of practice groups, depending on the main context they currently taught in or wanted to work in. This was so that CPs started to create contacts with similar teachers and to initiate future communities of practice. Individual audio (or, where possible, video) WhatsApp tutorials were offered to each teacher every week for 15–30 minutes to consolidate and extend the web-based synchronous work. Each CP had a Google Document assigned that was used for a weekly tutorial record with links to resources embedded (see example in Figure 4). This individualised work and follow-up tasks would account for a further three to four hours a week for each CP. Each of the six weeks had a different topic based on ones that would be expected to be covered at different levels in the Afghan English education system and from discussions with ELTAA and analysis of teaching materials supplied. Each unit was broken down into a series of strands and tasks that cover the four skills, grammar, vocabulary and/or phonology. All units included reflection tasks on individual teaching contexts (to represent the wide variety of teaching situations of the CPs), and the use of language in the classroom that was pitched at A2-B1 level (to allow participants to find the language accessible and reflect the level the CPs indicated they mostly taught at). Signposting to further activities to existing British Council websites or other relevant online resources and new teaching methods and techniques were also included, as that was specifically requested in the needs analysis by most of the CPs and in the application by ELTAA.

Figure 1: Example page of the WordPress bespoke online course

The screenshot shows a WordPress course page. At the top, a progress bar indicates '32% COMPLETE 21/65 Steps'. Navigation links include '< Previous Topic' and 'Mark Complete' with a checkmark. The left sidebar, titled 'ELTAA Language Improvement Course', lists units from 0 to 6, each with a checkmark and a dropdown for 'Topics'. The main content area is titled 'Teacher talk: Eliciting from students' and includes a breadcrumb trail: 'ELTAA Language Improvement Course > Unit 1: Talking about yourself and others > Teacher talk: Eliciting from students'. A 'Topic Focus' section contains a magnifying glass icon, the text 'In this topic you look at the language a teacher might use while teaching the grammar lesson from the previous topic.', and a '10 minutes' duration indicator. Below this is a section titled 'Checking understanding of meaning, form and pronunciation' with a paragraph of text and a note: 'NB: If you are using a mobile phone, this activity is best viewed in landscape mode.' At the bottom, there is a drag-and-drop activity box with the instruction 'Drag and drop the words to make correct sentences.' and several empty boxes for words.

Figures 2 and 3: Example WhatsApp Interactions

The screenshot shows a WhatsApp group chat titled 'Group 1'. The chat history includes a voice message, a document titled 'BRIC LEARNING ENGLISH 6 Minute Vocabulary British and American English', and a PDF file named 'u2B_6min_vocab_american_britis...'. Below these are two text messages: 'Here are the audio and transcript that you can download to practise listening and use with your students too.' and 'Other groups thought that this is useful topic to use for yourself OR students. US and UK English is used in Afghanistan - so might be interesting topic? What could you do with it in the classroom?'. At the bottom, two users have responded: 'Atiqullah Riaz Thank you 😊' and '+93 79 583 6832 - Beliana Mirzada Many thanks!'.



ELTAA Language Improvement Course



Tutorial Record:

Each week, we hope to meet you via WhatsApp and speak to you individually about areas of the course that interest you; language improvement, classroom practice and teaching methodology. This document will be used to keep a record of some of the discussions and ideas in each tutorial.

Each tutorial will last for 15 minutes in individual time slots - so please be ready to start and end on time. You should try to be in a quiet, private space and have a good internet connection if possible. Use the video and voice if you can - but switch your camera OFF if the sound is bad and use WhatsApp like a telephone.

Tutorial 1
<p>Recording yourself for fluency work</p> <p>Record yourself - to see when and how often you pause and use 'er' or 'um' as a filler. You can look at the Community Language Learning methodology that uses recording of students as a technique for learning too.</p> <p>https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/community-language-learning</p> <p>Stress patterns</p> <p>Stressed and Unstressed words in speaking - normally (unless for a reason) nouns, adjectives, most adverbs and main verbs are stressed (full vowel sounds) and other words like articles, aux. verbs and prepositions are unstressed and use the weak form of the vowel - the SCHWA sound. E.g. 'I start teaching again on the 5th of March. See here for more information HERE</p>

Figure 4: Example Google Doc Tutorial Record

Project Findings

1. Working in partnership

The developing and challenging situation for ELTAA with the context in Afghanistan and this region being somewhat new to the ELTC, along with the pandemic generally, a clear understanding of how both partners (ELTAA and ELTC) were working, the current issues and opportunities both faced and our preferred communication channels were key elements of how the eventual successful partnership and project started and developed later. Background research online, identification of the key project members and drivers from both sides and initial individual email contact and WhatsApp meetings were useful to set future timelines, project parameters and start to formulate/negotiate initial ideas for the course design based on the project bid documents. These first phases of the project were critical to manage expectations and assumptions from the partners (in this case the primary language improvement aim) and set the positive and constructive working relationship that followed.

Regular and varied communication for refinement of the course as it progressed was a clear indication of a collaborative approach from both sides. Areas that could be negotiated, and those that could not, being made clear and flexibility was shown from the partners to maximise the experience for the CPs, including adding methodology and context-specific content.

Despite longer-term benefits and opportunities being an aspiration for the partners, earlier discussions and planning would have led to this being more effective and deliverable. Furthermore, with the specific challenges in this context, wider support from outside the partnership with other established local organisations and institutions should have been identified to benefit from already-set infrastructures and approaches.

Learning points:

- Analysis of the current partner organisation and working practices
- Key contacts and project driving factors identified
- Early establishment of the project parameters, expectations and timelines with preferred communication methods
- Negotiation of where course flexibility and adaptation is achievable and where not
- Bring in support from existing relevant and appropriate external sources
- Build in longer-term benefits and opportunities for the partnership

2. Working within the CoP

The use of a CoP for the UK partner was an extremely positive and useful approach for not only the individual projects, but for the individuals that interacted with each other. The use of Slack as the platform allowed for the organisation of themes and communication was effective and relied on engagement from the project partners, which, although varied depending on need and timing, overall had a great impact on this project. In particular, by sharing ideas with projects that had similar initial issues and challenges, the partners could gain insights and possible solutions quickly and with empathy. An assumption that ELTAA would also be part of similar CoPs for the overseas partners was not realised and perhaps a version of this could have been beneficial for the project and the development of the teacher associations generally.

A key successful factor of the CoP was the lead partner NILE, and it is doubtful this approach would have been sustained without them. Another important factor was the various communication channels (beyond Slack) employed, including group and individual Zoom meetings, emails and sharing of files, which allowed for differentiated interactions and a cohesive understanding of the project more generally. The shared input from the 17 UK partners, with similar questions, stories and outcomes, meant NILE could communicate these to the British Council (and English UK and IATEFL) efficiently and we could show a collective voice. It is expected that a fair amount of repetition of planning, resources and administrative processes was carried out by the individual UK partners and the CoP could be better used to share these and increase economies of scale for all.

Learning points:

- It is an effective way to develop project skills, approaches and communications
- Include a lead and facilitator
- All partners should have an opportunity to be part of a CoP
- A variety of communication and interaction channels are preferable
- More collating and sharing of core documents and processes

3. Working with the course participants

The relatively small numbers of CPs allowed for both quantitative and qualitative needs analysis to be carried out, with an online questionnaire, individual interviews and, a discrete item-level test (British Council website) and a written and spoken English assessment (with questions and prompts that added further situational information as well). Assumptions about the ELTAA and ELTC being able to promote the course through existing membership channels and with potential non-members, who may have benefitted from the course, were accurate but were not fully realised. This was due in part to the context described in the sections above, and in part due to the tight timelines and lack of involvement with key potential CPs in local, more rural areas. Future projects may benefit from involvement with potential CPs in areas not covered by the partner organising committee and with regions and sectors not currently engaged in teacher development more widely. Although language improvement was the key outcome in this project, and was a need identified by most CPs (and was achieved through the course materials and approach), mid- to higher-level CPs (B1+) seemed more engaged in the project and had more requests for methodology and teaching technique improvement. This may be due to the English-through-English nature of much of the initial promotion and needs analysis, so more L1 could be used to engage teachers at the lower levels (A1–A2) and who may benefit more from language-only improvement courses. It could also reflect the real pedagogical needs of the CPs at those level and could suggest future areas for projects or other approaches to possible CP engagement. The one-to-one interactions in the weekly tutorial were by far the most rewarding part of the course for the ELTC tutors and feedback from the CPs also agreed (see section on course outcomes below). The individualised, context-specific discussions and responses to the weekly reflection and requests from the CPs really did allow for meaningful development of both language and methodology. This also meant the emotional connection between the CPs and tutors was more intense than expected and may require more training and consideration for tutors in future projects, in particular in regions that are in challenging and unstable circumstances. It might also suggest an exit strategy and post-course development and opportunities for the CPs too.

Learning points:

- Detailed analysis of the needs and situation of the CPs
- Consider the promotion and communication channels and approaches
- Investigate the potential CPs not already engaged in development activities
- Use L1 to interact with lower-level CPs to maximise engagement
- Individualised and context-specific content is beneficial and motivating
- Consider the emotional impact on tutors and CPs from one-to-one interactions
- Have an ‘exit strategy’ for the CPs

4. Designing/delivering the course

The design phase of the project was carried out as expected with input and collaboration with ELTAA, which was crucial to the successful incorporation of the local context generally in the overall course design. CPs were also included later, after making direct contact with them, and they proved to be key sources of information for the course design to be refined further and more individually needs driven. Earlier involvement with at least a sample of the CPs would be even more effective. The particular situation in Afghanistan outlined in sections above drove the choice of delivery technology, project timescales and later adaptations to the initial bidding documents submitted by the ELTC and ELTAA. Technical assumptions were tested in the detailed analysis carried out with ELTAA, CPs and with general regional research, including tech focus groups. Without considerable lead-in time for this analysis and planning stage, the design phase of the course could lack sufficient and appropriate data that would often be hard to include later, with hindsight. Including all stakeholders in the design phase from ELTAA and ELTC partners (committee members, CPs, technical and administrative support, and course tutors and materials developers) was key to see how specific design and delivery features would potentially work or not. The timescale for the course delivery was pushed back in light of the some of the context issues, but still allowed for the majority of the programme to be completed before the end of March (time was allowed for more CP completion of the required 90 per cent the online units in April and for a group course closing event in May). Adaptations to the course were made after the first two units had been delivered (by design) when the amount of work required and progression on the online units from the CPs was reviewed, and subsequently reduced with discussions with ELTAA and using feedback from the CPs in tutorials. Partly due to the timescales and partly so as to respond to the ongoing needs of the course, units were designed one to two weeks in advance of delivery, which although at first was intense and deadlines for the design team were tight, the approach settled over time and were less pressing towards the end. This indicates that more allocation of resources early in a project is more likely to be needed.

The core delivery channel was the mobile-friendly online course that was able to be accessed by all but one of the CPs easily and suggested the technical infrastructure analysis and support measures (data supply, tech and admin support) from both partners were successful. Supplementary interactions to the main delivery varied from CP to CP depending on their access to higher internet speeds allowing for synchronous WhatsApp communications, but those that could be gained from the project in differentiated ways.

Learning points:

- Key stakeholders are needed in the course design phase
- Have a significant lead-in time for context and needs analysis before design beginnings
- Not having a fixed design past the initial delivery phase to allow for design adaptations
- Allow for more resources at the beginning of the project phases
- Build in tech and admin support for CPs and tutors
- Make any core delivery channel the most open and accessible to all
- Consider supplementary and complementary delivery mechanisms to cater to a diverse CP cohort

5. Course outcomes

The WordPress site has an integrated monitoring system to check registrations, unit progress and task achievement in some cases and was the main way to assess the course in a quantitative way. This showed that of the 36 CPs who applied for the course, 24 completed. A further one failed to register for the online course, two registered but did not start and eight did not finish the expected amount of online course content to have been deemed to complete (90 per cent+) and receive a certificate. Interestingly, some that did not finish the online content did attend the majority of their one-to-one tutorials and contribute to the WhatsApp groups, showing that the varying approach to delivery for this smallish cohort was important. Other monitoring of course outcomes came from the course tutors and CPs meeting once a week to regularly check progress and to motivate/encourage and direct the learning on the main course site and in the WhatsApp groups and Google Docs. In total 183 (from a possible 216) one-to-one tutorials were carried out and, with corresponding written records shared with the CPs, over 20,000 words in English were added to the group shared Google Docs and WhatsApp Communities of Practice. The level of participation varied from individual to individual CPs over the course, and depended somewhat on their professional and personal situations, available time, English level and interest in the various topics. Regular communication between the ELTC and ELTAA on the CPs' progress and issues allowed for encouragement, prompting and ultimately meant more CPs completed the online units. Evaluation came from reflection tasks (in the one-to-one tutorials, embedded in the units and in the WhatsApp and Google Doc tasks) that asked CPs to say what and how they have learned and if it could be useful for them within their specific teaching context. At the end of unit 6, CPs were asked to evaluate the course through a questionnaire (and 26 responded) with the key question relating to the main outcome of the course, that of 'building confidence using English in the classroom', and on this all 26 felt MORE confident after taking the course than before. When asked what were, for them, the best aspects of the course, open written comments fell into three main categories: tutorials, online units and methodology improvement. On the tutorials, one CP commented, 'The best part of the course was having a meeting with a special tutor every week. I never had the experience of talking with a native, but now I am very much pleased that I had this opportunity,' and another wrote that 'Talking native language experts who taught us about the unseen teaching methodology.

Totally, it was a productive experience.' About the online units and tasks, a CP stated that 'The exercises were the best part for me, this would help me to evaluate through the course.' and a second commented 'the course was outstanding and gave us the opportunity to have access to many extra materials and information related to each item of a unit.' Finally, a CP concluded that 'In my perspective, this was an outstanding course for all the participants, especially myself. One thing that's important to be considered is that we could empower our teaching methodology through this course.' Tutors reflected that they had found it a privilege to work with the individual teachers and enjoyed designing and delivering the course and can be summed up by one tutor's message to her WhatsApp group in parting: 'Thank you for all your weekly participation and valuable WhatsApp comments and engagement. It's been insightful chatting one-to-ones in the sometimes rooftop calls to get signal: to find out more about your personal circumstances and day-to-day lives. Sending you light and peace and more sunshine than rain for your New Year week and success for scholarship applications and future courses.'

Learning points:

- Regular contact with CPs and tutors can help monitor and increase course outcome achievement
- Online courses benefit with in-built progression tools
- Individual contact (even in small amounts) is an extremely positive experience
- Adding value by context and need additions is worthwhile
- A range of course delivery channels and methods improve course outcome achievement

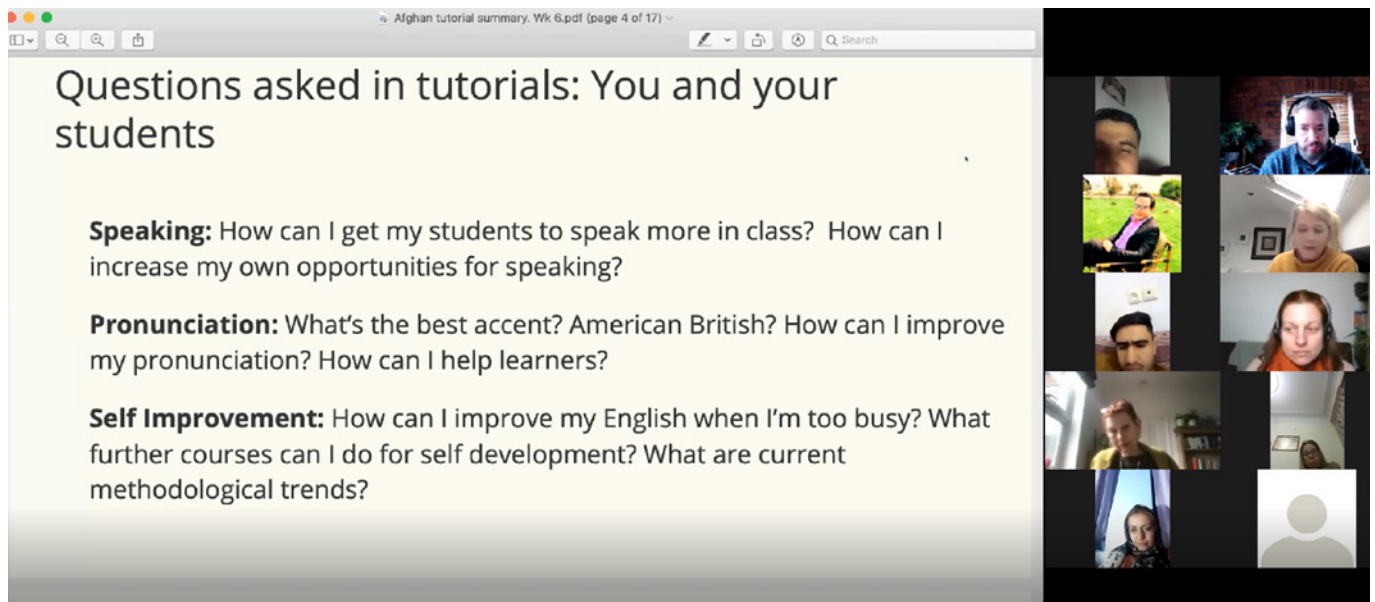


Figure 5: Screenshot on ELTAA Zoom Closing Event on 05 May 2021

Key learning points

A range of themes can be summarised from the five specific areas above and have been collated into 11 final key learning points that can be taken forward for the team at the ELTC in Sheffield and for project approaches more generally. An overall learning point is to allow time at the end of the course delivery to celebrate the CPs' completion and to recognise and publicise the work of the project partners more widely. This was achieved through the organisation and recording of an online project closing ceremony where invited external guests from the key supporting stakeholder or local representatives, CPs, course tutors and designers spoke and shared experiences of the project (see Figure 5 above from the event on 05 May 2021). The collaborative and developmental nature of this project, using a CoP as a tool for interaction and evaluation, as well as the innovative use of technology to delivery this project remotely from partners across the world, will provide a rich source of inspiration and reflection for the future of global teacher development at the ELTC and more widely. A final reflection from one CP on the WhatsApp group and that summed up the spirit of the project in Afghanistan was 'Let me close my saying by our goal is focus, our coalition is strong. Long live humanity ...'

Summative learning points:

- Establish the project parameters and expectations before the bidding and design phase
- Investigate potential CPs not currently engaged and identify other project support in local areas
- Complete an early and detailed situational analysis and involve the CPs as soon as possible
- Build in flexibility and adaptability, along with longer-term benefits, in the design stages
- A facilitated CoP is an effective way to share processes and develop project approaches for all
- A variety of communication, interaction and delivery channels are preferable for the CoP and CPs
- Individualised and context-specific content is beneficial and motivating
- Consider the emotional impact on tutors and CPs from one-to-one interactions
- Build in tech and admin support for CPs and tutors with a main platform that all can access
- Regular individual contact with CPs and tutors can help increase course outcome achievement
- Online courses benefit from in-built progression tools and the use of a CoP for CPs is effective

Bangladesh

Project background

1. Description of the partners

New College Group consists of three schools – two in the North of England (Manchester and Liverpool) and one in Dublin. The PRELIM project was driven by the Manchester and Liverpool schools. The initial proposal to the British Council was co-written by the principals of the two schools, Kerill Kennedy and Peter Dean. The course content was developed by the group curriculum manager, Marc Biggam, and subsequently adapted by the teachers who were from both schools.

The ETA, Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association (BELTA) was founded in 1984 with a stated aim “to develop and empower teachers at all levels (primary, secondary, tertiary, institutional) in order to facilitate effective communication within the English language teaching community and to improve the standards of learning and teaching English throughout the country.” The members of BELTA directly involved in the PRELIM project were the BELTA president Dr Rubina Khan, past president Harunur Rashid Khan, treasurer Dr Akhter Jahan and Dr Md. Zulfeqar Haider.

2. Key features of the context

From our discussions with BELTA, it was clear that there were large differences between the level of English (and presumably confidence in use) of teachers at different levels of the education system. Secondary/high school teachers were regarded as having a far higher level of English than primary teachers. This was mostly due to the fact that in high schools English teachers were subject teachers, and this was reflected in how much they would have to teach English and, presumably, in the recruitment criteria for these jobs. At the primary (Elementary school in the parlance of the BELTA team) school level, however, the teachers were generalists, teaching all subjects of the curriculum to their class and thus their ability to teach across the subjects was more important.

Another differentiator of ability was between rural and urban areas, with teachers in urban areas having a much higher standard of English at both primary and secondary level.

Access to and the cost of the internet was another important issue. While 4G was common in many urban areas, some rural areas only had access to 3G. In addition, many teachers were reliant on their mobile phones to access the internet due to the lack of broadband and Wi-Fi infrastructure. When considered in comparison to the income of teachers in Bangladesh, internet data was seen as an expensive commodity.

Finally, the PRELIM project was launched in the middle of the COVID pandemic. The use of local lockdowns would have increased the relative cost of data while lockdowns and/or increases in unemployment would have increased the number of people in the family home when classes might be scheduled. This would make it potentially more difficult to find time or a quiet space to attend classes.

The number of CPs was fewer than expected, and it is possible this was due to some extent to data costs. While there was, subsequently, the launch of the connectivity grant, this was not known at the initial stage of ‘recruiting’ CPs.

2. Outline of the course and rationale

The needs analysis

The needs analysis was created based on general considerations about student level and access to technology, further informed by meetings with the BELTA team.

The analysis was split into several sections. One section was on availability and familiarity of technology/programmes and internet, one was on privacy, one on study time (both class and additional work), one on English level and normal use of English, and one on what students wanted from the course.

The needs analysis seemed to show that live classrooms were a viable option given the internet, devices and programme familiarity of the potential CPs. It suggested that four hours was the average suggested time and that 20:00 start time was seen as a good time for the classes. The emphasis placed on speaking/listening and pair/group work also suggested that live classes would best cater for the needs of the students. At the same time, writing and reading were still suggested by a lot of students, so we would need to cater to this to some extent in the online classes and also in the supporting activities and materials for out of class. We would also have to run a much larger range of levels than initially envisaged, as students were not generally A2 like we had though they would be.

While improving English was by far the most common given answer for what they wanted to get out of the course, improving teaching was also mentioned in some form 12 times in individual comments. This represented a minority, albeit a substantial one, and we decided to cater for this in the extension activities for higher-level CPs, as they would be able to handle methodology (particularly reflections tasks) whereas lower levels would struggle to do so.

Learning point: *Self-rated level of English is not always a reliable indicator of actual level. For Bangladesh, based on this small sample, there is a tendency for teachers to under-rate their English level.*

Online placement tests

In addition to the needs analysis, potential CPs were sent a link to an online placement test. Only a few potential CPs actually completed this and, as a result, we were not able to garner as much information as we had hoped, leading to some initial difficulties with the course.

Looking back, I feel that speaking tests would probably have been a better option and the CPs would have welcomed getting an initial test of this kind. Had we asked BELTA for their suggestions on placement testing, and the connectivity grant been introduced earlier, we probably would have used this method to support the online test.

Learning point: *What kind of placement tests would work best in the context and alternative ways of checking student English levels should be discussed with the ETA.*

Choice of video class platform

We asked potential CPs about the two platforms that we were most familiar using – Zoom and Google Meetings – and did not ask about other platforms such as Microsoft Teams, as we wanted to use platforms our teachers were comfortable using and teaching on. From the start, we had an initial preference for Zoom as it has proven far more stable than similar platforms when lots of people are talking and also has more useful teaching functions built in, like breakout rooms. We were therefore happy that it was the platform that CPs were most familiar with too, making it an easy choice for us.

Evaluation of the video class platform

Overall, I think Zoom was the right choice of platform. Teachers and CPs have been comfortable using it and, while there have been connection issues, they have actually been far fewer than we had feared. Breakout rooms for group work, a strength of the platform, were used, although connection issues combined with class level made them somewhat less viable for some potential activities, such as group speaking tasks and groups working on, for example, shared Google documents.

Choice of community/asynchronous/extension platforms

This was a much more difficult choice, particularly as we felt we had to be careful of privacy issues. Despite the familiarity of both CPs and our teachers with WhatsApp, we ultimately did not feel we could use the platform due to these issues. In the end, the fact that almost every single CP had a Gmail address, and the fact that it was a teaching platform, we eventually elected to go with Google Classroom. Not only would all teachers have immediate access to it without needing to sign up, it might be useful for CPs to gain a familiarity with it for their own teaching. Google Classroom fulfilled the key requirements of ease of use/access, the ability to set materials and homework and a place where students could discuss and answer questions.

Learning point: *The intended use of asynchronous platforms needs to be clearly introduced, clearly explained and training given on its intended use.*

NCG Online platform

From the focus group it seemed that some CPs made extensive use of the NCG Online self-study platform. Sadly, we could only check this through the system itself.

Learning point: *To evaluate asynchronous learning on a self-study platform it should have the ability to collect data on CP usage of materials and time spent on self-study.*

Course design

We decided to use existing materials as the basis of the online classes, supplemented by asynchronous tasks that were bespoke or from other providers. We covered topics and areas that were related to self-study units on the NCG Online platform. This was so that CPs with the time/desire to study more would be doing so by extending what they had done in class, rather than something completely unrelated. We also trained our teachers in using Google Classroom, as the platform was new to them as well.

Course launch

The biggest issue with the course at launch was the fact that those students who had self-reported as being Beginner/A1 were in fact high A2. Their teacher increased the difficulty of the content and the remainder of the course was redesigned, and the course was then a lot more appropriate and successful. Some interesting cultural issues arose – our teachers are used to being addressed relatively informally by their first name by students and there were also some differences in Zoom netiquette. The netiquette issues were addressed by a document and training from the teachers in the early part of the course.

Learning point: *Rules and expectations for synchronous classes should be shared and discussed with CPs before course start.*

NCG Online social events

Our PRELIM course participants were invited to take part in the social programme of our existing students. There is usually three to four hours of these each week (via Zoom) and a number of the PRELIM CPs have been taking part in these for the extra practice and to meet students from outside Bangladesh.

Learning point: *Opportunities to integrate PRELIM CPs with other students of the institution should be sought, as it is beneficial to all parties.*

Project findings

1. Working in partnership

NCG found the partnership with BELTA to be very straightforward. They were responsive to emails and the initial meetings were pleasant, helpful and informative. BELTA, similarly found NCG easy to communicate with and seemed comfortable raising issues about the course.

Differences in understanding

There were, however, some differences between the initial assumptions held by NCG and BELTA in terms of how the project would work and how much input BELTA wanted to have into the design of the project. NCG, when presenting the outline made for the initial proposal to the British Council, stressed that it was only a possible outline and open to change but perhaps beginning with no stated outline and simply having an open-ended discussion would have better allowed BELTA to feed into the process.

Learning point: *It is probably better to go into initial meetings with the ETA with no prior plan or assumptions.*

2. Working within the CoP

Working within the CoP was very useful and provided many benefits:

- 1) The online discussion sessions (and resulting documents) were very useful, generating lots of ideas and also raising considerations that I, certainly, had not thought of before.
- 2) There was a definite sense of community in the online Zoom sessions and members seemed to feel that they were supported or felt they had the opportunity to seek support from other members. Members who were worried about issues such as having more/fewer CPs than envisaged or with higher dropout rates also seemed greatly relieved to find that other partnerships had the same or similar issues.
- 3) Partnerships that started later than others were able to understand issues and approaches that others had experienced and take them into account. This allowed adjustments in course structure, technology used for delivery and also consideration of whether the ETA could provide additional regional support to the CPs.
- 4) For members of the group like myself who are relatively new to the UK EFL industry and seldom take part in networking events, it was an excellent opportunity to meet fellow professionals around the UK working on undeniably positive projects with common goals.
- 5) The role of CoP facilitation and supporting the feeding of ideas and discussions between groups is key to success.
- 6) It has almost certainly led to long-term relationships being formed. From the start of the project I had many discussions with another institution, which has been productive, pleasant and formed a bond upon which both schools can call on for future projects, whether similar or completely unrelated to the PRELIM project.

Personally, I was happy with the online meetings, the group Google documents and the shared Google Drive and found them all very useful. I did not use Slack that much, and usually as a place to remember where links were and to message individual members of the CoP rather than post for the CoP as a whole.

3. Working with the CPs

From the initial list of 77 teachers, 53 subsequently completed either the needs analysis or placement test and thus were considered to have enrolled on the course. Among the 53, 40 of attended the online classes at some point with an average of 35 CPs attending each week. Of those who did not attend the online classes, two subsequently pulled out of the course due to life commitments. Several reported having used the asynchronous resources available while some did not reply to further enquiries about whether they were joining the course. There was a roughly 2:1 female to male ratio among those attending the online classes.

The CPs who attended the online classes were a lovely and enthusiastic group of learners with a real hunger to learn and improve their English. The NCG teachers delivering the online classes really enjoyed teaching their groups, particularly when initial teething problems with levels and Zoom etiquette had been worked through. CPs with internet issues often showed great determination in trying to reconnect to classes/get their audio working, etc., and were also very understanding and helpful when other CPs had connection issues. CPs often reported to their teachers how happy they were that the course was a communicative one rather than passive lectures or self-study slides.

Learning point: *Incorporating an interactive, synchronous element to remote English for teachers courses in Bangladesh increases CP engagement.*

4. Course outcomes

CP course outcome – mid-course and final feedback

There had been a lack of CP feedback in the early stages of the course, so, at the half-way point, I asked the teachers to ask the students if some would be willing to partake in a short focus group on Zoom. This highlighted the CPs' desire for more listening practice and their concerns about their pronunciation and allowed the course teachers to make adjustments. The course tutors also found the positive comments of the focus group about the course highly motivational.

Learning point: *Focus groups can be a good way to get useful feedback.*

The end-of-course feedback form was sent to all CPs who had initially expressed interest in PRELIM and had subsequently completed the initial placement test or the needs analysis.

Access to the learning tools

End-of-course feedback highlighted:

- The CPs seemed to find it universally easy to use Zoom and had no problems using the links provided
- Internet did prevent some students from attending some classes
- The self-study resources on NCGOnline seemed easy for CPs to access most of the time

CPs generally found it easy to access and use the Google Classroom resources, the individual comments left in the survey suggested that they had not seen or used it before and two implied they might use it for their own online teaching.

In the first half of the course it became apparent that CPs were not really leaving comments or asking questions in the stream in Google Classroom, so the end-of-course survey specifically sought more information on this. Reasons for not adding to conversations on the stream included 'I was too busy' (one), 'I used the Zoom so didn't need it' (one), 'it seems difficult' (one) and 'I felt uneasy as it was my first online class' (one). Most respondents stated they sometimes or often added to the conversations, but this is not borne out when checking the number of comments added to the classroom streams.

CP assessment of teaching and materials

CPs overwhelmingly found the Zoom classes to be very good or good and felt similarly about the materials and classroom activities.

The spread of results in the group initially who had self-reported as A1 (but were in fact A2, A2+) has the same spread of very good-good as CPs in the other classes. This was a relief, as it suggested the early correction in materials and class difficulty for this group was successful.

The strongest positive response was to the activities used in class, and discussions with students in the mid-course focus group, the farewell ceremony and comments left in feedback and the stream implied that many of the activities, apps and links used in the course were new to the CPs, with some mentioning that they would be interested in using them in their own practice.

CPs' view of the asynchronous self-access materials was very positive, but less so than for aspects of the synchronous classes. This was not unexpected, as the focus group had already suggested that CPs felt that the live Zoom classes were far more important and useful to them than the asynchronous materials. Several CPs had also been pleasantly surprised that they were getting live classes with "native speakers" as part of the course and this seemed to differ from online training they had done in the past.

CP confidence and English level

The whole point of the project was, of course, to increase the confidence of CPs in their use of English and especially in their own teaching. CPs overwhelmingly reported that they would be more confident in using English in their teaching following the course.

In terms of confidence in different aspects of English, CPs varied in what extent they felt they had improved/become more confident. Reading, writing and grammar were the three areas where CPs felt they had improved the most. One CP, who attended only one class did not feel they had improved in speaking, listening, grammar, pronunciation or spelling. Lack of improvement/increased confidence was reported most in listening, which was raised as a concern in the mid-course focus group. Speaking and pronunciation were areas where the most common response by CPs was that they had improved a little or were a little more confident. This is supported anecdotally by discussions I had with students in the focus group, at the farewell ceremony and in the class I covered about their pronunciation concerns.

From my discussions with our teachers, and my interactions with the students, we did not feel that the CPs had serious problems with pronunciation. I suspect that poor pronunciation may be perceived by teachers in Bangladesh as being an important issue and quite an important factor in the confidence of teachers. Whether this is because they feel they should be close to a specific standard (e.g. RP or General American) as opposed to a focus on international intelligibility is something that would be worth investigating. Looking at the course in hindsight, CPs may have felt more confident if they had been reassured more about their pronunciation and the acceptability of different accents. More pronunciation practice could certainly have been included in the asynchronous materials.

Learning point: *Factors that affect confidence in using English (e.g. pronunciation in Bangladesh) should be explored in the initial stages with the ETA, through the needs analysis and addressed in the course.*

Course teacher and assessment perspective

CPs who did not attend the online classes also did not complete tasks on Google Classroom or take part in the final test. For those who did attend the online classes their facility with English clearly improved. Every student who took part in the online classes either passed the final test (including speaking, listening, reading and writing) or had shown enough improvement in class to be able to pass the test if they missed one or both test days/had connectivity issues. While the tests set were deliberately not very difficult, we had not expected a 100 per cent pass rate and the pass rate really was indicative of how much the students had improved. Framing this in terms of our usual classes, all students in the A2+ and B1 groups would have moved up to study B1 or B2 levels, while the B2 students would have moved on to a B2+ or C1 class.

Course outcomes

The CPs clearly found the course useful and felt they had greatly improved in their English – something which both the teachers and assessment results agree with. Self-reported increase in confidence is also substantial, although we have no other indicators to substantiate this.

All of the NCG staff involved learnt a great deal about Bangladesh and people there, had to adapt to issues with connectivity and access and learned how to use Google Classroom in their teaching. The project also allowed members of staff from different offices to work together and to get to know each other, building cross-school bonds within NCG.

Learning point: *Projects like this bring benefits not just for the students, but also for the course providers.*

Learning point: *Projects like PRELIM, when done as cross-school or cross-campus projects, can greatly assist team building and communication.*

Key learning points

Self-rated level of English is not always a reliable indicator of actual level. For Bangladesh, based on this small sample, there is a tendency for teachers to under-rate their English level.

- What kind of placement tests would work best in the context and alternative ways of checking student English levels should be discussed with the ETA
- The intended use of asynchronous platforms needs to be clearly introduced, clearly explained and training given on its intended use
- To evaluate asynchronous learning on a self-study platform it should have the ability to collect data on CP usage of materials and time spent on self-study
- Rules and expectations for synchronous classes should be shared and discussed with CPs before course start
- Opportunities to integrate PRELIM CPs with other students of the institution should be sought, as it is beneficial to all parties
- It is probably better to go into initial meetings with the ETA with no prior plan or assumptions
- Projects like this would benefit from a longer period prior to the deadline to finish the course
- Incorporating an interactive, synchronous element to remote English for teachers courses in Bangladesh increases CP engagement
- Focus groups can be a good way to get useful feedback
- Projects like this bring benefits not just for the students, but also for the course providers
 - Projects like PRELIM, when done as cross-school or cross-campus projects, can greatly assist team building and communication

Pakistan

Project background

1.1 Description of the partners

1.1.1 SPELT

The Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers (SPELT) is a registered, non-political, non-government, voluntary body of English Language teachers from schools, colleges and universities. Formed in 1984, in Karachi, it is dedicated to improving the standard of English teaching and learning in Pakistan. SPELT operates on the principle of teamwork and self-help to enable maximum exploitation of the limited resources available in the country. As a body, it attempts to be well informed about recent developments in teaching techniques, which invariably need to be modified in order to suit the needs and limitations of the Pakistani situation. It has over 600 members, but through various national activities and programmes it reaches around 5,000 teachers.

1.1.2 OIEG

Oxford International Education Group (OIEG) has provided educational services to international and UK-based students for the last 30 years. While its headquarters are in Greenwich, it has a substantial global presence, with language schools and International Colleges in the USA, Canada, Germany and across the UK.

The language division of the company usually sees over 30,000 students study a variety of courses every year. The Junior Programmes department is one of the largest young learner provisions in the UK, and includes the BEO World programmes, a unique and innovative international schools programme that takes place each spring with over 4,000 students taking part. In 2013 the company began negotiations with a number of internationally-minded UK universities to establish and manage teaching colleges for international students on their campuses. OIEG has also recently launched the OI Digital Institute, which focuses on delivering high-quality academic courses online.

1.2 Key features of the context

SPELT established at the beginning that the Course Participants (CPs) were likely to be from urban areas, as it would have been difficult for them to reach more remote areas in the timeframe provided. CPs would also be from a variety of different school types, from primary, secondary as well as tertiary education.

SPELT requested that the course focused on communicative language teaching. In addition, they wanted an element of the course to be delivered via mobile phone technology, which may later be relevant to participants involved in the National Curriculum rollout, where mobile learning might be used to reach more remote areas of Pakistan.

The main focus of the course was language and functional language for English teaching, linked to a variety of methodology areas. For example, in speaking lessons, the focus could be on giving effective instructions when setting up pair work and group work. When teaching vocabulary, the functions focused on concept-checking questions, etc. We tried to provide a balanced exposure to all language skills and systems and a variety of language functions used in an ESL classroom.

1.3 Outline of the course and a rationale

In terms of language development points, the ten-week course was mainly informed by the EAQUALS/British Council-level language inventories. It was further adapted to reflect common difficulties Urdu and Hindi speakers experience, as provided by SPELT, and the results of the needs analysis undertaken by CPs. Furthermore, the needs analysis yielded particular concerns about:

- Pronunciation and spelling
- Word order and question formation
- Functional language
- Nouns and determiners

We chose the teaching materials for the course with the above in mind.

The course was delivered using Zoom (one 90-minute synchronous session once a week) and WhatsApp (three one-hour synchronous sessions throughout the week).

The objectives of the Zoom sessions were threefold:

1. Language input (general English appropriate for the level)
2. Teaching language input (e.g. formulating effective instructions)
3. Modelling communicative teaching practice to the CPs

Every week the CPs also received an activity linked to the lesson's objectives (e.g. in a lesson focused on speaking skills, the CPs received an energiser activity) to trial with their students and to reflect on.

The WhatsApp sessions aimed to provide additional practice with the target language, both general English and English for teaching. In addition, they offered mentoring guidance with the weekly activities. CPs and mentors discussed how to adapt to the CPs' context, and how set up and deliver them successfully, and they were encouraged to reflect on their experience. Project findings

Project findings

2.1 Working in partnership

Overall, the working relationship with SPELT was very satisfactory. However, there were a number of challenges that impacted the project. One such challenge was the recruitment process and the project lead time. While SPELT and OIEG agreed on the objectives and course design relatively quickly, participants required a lot more information about the content and outcomes of the course, areas covered, etc. SPELT was able to provide some information in the form of a written summary document; however, a more detailed scheme of work was only produced after analysing the needs of the applicants. As a result, the first few weeks of the course required ongoing efforts to manage CPs' expectations.

The other challenge we faced were English language levels of CPs. Even though the recruitment (and the course) intended to reach participants with a lower linguistic proficiency, many teachers who participated in the project were of a much higher level (and confidence) than initially anticipated. SPELT pointed out that often the members and non-members from the affiliated schools tend to be of a higher linguistic proficiency. Reaching teachers of a lower proficiency and limited timeframe was a rather challenging task. It is also possible that the initial lack of clarity in regards to the course content was discouraging for lower proficiency users, and that the more proficient users of English were more willing to handle some degree of uncertainty about the course and its content.

The above also had a knock-on effect on the course design and preparation. The placement test and needs analysis results were not available to us until early January. As a result, the actual materials selected for the course design had to be changed and were not finalised until mid-January.

2.2 Working with the community of practice (CoP)

The CoP was invaluable throughout the process of designing and delivering the project. It was a supportive and friendly environment, which not only contributed to the success of the course but also allowed for peer learning and professional networking. Two key communication platforms were used during the project. Slack was used mainly for asynchronous communication and sharing of resources; Zoom was used for synchronous meetings.

I remain unsure whether Slack was the best choice; however, this probably reflects my personal preferences. I found that the number of channels was rather high and the selection of categories, at times, a little misleading. What I would categorise under one channel or heading, someone else would interpret and categorise differently. As a result, and especially as time went on, it became increasingly more difficult to find and revisit certain ideas, which may not have been relevant earlier. Similarly, it was a bit tricky to reconcile information from the main channel chat and the threads.

On the other hand, the Zoom calls were excellent, especially when it was possible to choose a topic or room that was most relevant to the given context. I found this often brought together people working on similar concepts, and for me this was where the sharing aspect of the CoP was most productive.

2.3 Working with the CPs

There were 52 participants on the project, of whom nine were male (there may be some discrepancy with this number as the data is based on voice recognition only). The vast majority were from urban areas of Pakistan, mainly Karachi, Islamabad and Lahore. Only one CP dropped out from the course; however, an additional 11 participants had attendance below 50 per cent. Most of the CPs were primary school teachers, but there were also teachers from secondary schools, universities as well as pre-schools.

It was not until after the course launch that we learned that many of the primary school teachers were in fact not language teachers. We were assured by the course participants, and SPELT, that many of these teachers are required to use English as a medium of instruction, thus will benefit from the course. At a much later stage we also learned that primary school teachers in Pakistan are assigned a subject to teach. This can be maths one year, but English the next year. English tends to be perceived as one of the most prestigious subjects to teach, as such it is often only assigned to those with a high language proficiency. Although this did not seem to affect CPs' motivation or attendance, it somewhat impacted the practical component of the course, as many of the participants could not trial the provided activities and reflect on their teaching experience.

In addition, it is possible that the prestige associated with certain teaching positions or institutions affected, at least initially, the dynamics of the teaching and mentoring groups. Some participants were very clearly quite confident and dominant in the interactions, while others were rather withdrawn and did not engage fully until later in the course.

2.4 Designing and delivering the course

The majority of the participants had a B2/C1 level of proficiency. While it was not particularly difficult to keep them challenged and engaged in the language sessions, it proved challenging to keep the focus of the English for teaching sessions and WhatsApp groups on language functions. Most of the English for teaching language input and a lot of the mentoring hours resulted in discussions of methodology.

In hindsight, it would have been beneficial to have more time pre-launch to train the course tutors and mentors accordingly. In some cases, the high language proficiency of the CPs led to a rather trainer-centred approach during the teacher language sessions and/or mentoring group where the methodology was presented (and discussed), but the language aims slipped, as it may have been perceived too low for the CPs' level.

Another challenge that the OIEG teachers had to reconcile internally was the lack of camera use. OIEG has quite a strict cameras-on policy and while the teachers had been informed about the cultural nuances that may lead to cameras off, they were caught rather off guard when that was the reality for most of their class. Some found it genuinely difficult to teach, others admitted that it led, once again, to a more teacher-centred delivery than they would have liked. While some coping strategies were discussed during the course (e.g. gender splits for break out rooms, using PPT throughout to minimise the 'blank, dark screen' effect, nominating speakers), I do feel that some staff may have felt under prepared.

On a managerial level, the flexibility of the project and the freedom to experiment was very refreshing, but I do think that for a very conscientious teacher, with limited training experience, this may have been somewhat frustrating.

2.5 Course outcomes

The course outcomes were evaluated in the following way:

- Self-assessment of the participants at the beginning and at the end of the course
- General end-of-course feedback with all CPs
- End-of-course feedback and reflection focus group with course tutors
- End-of-course focus group with the ETA

In the first and last Zoom sessions, CPs were asked to reflect on their abilities as language learners and as language teachers. This was done in class via Mentimeter and individually via Linkert scales in Google Forms. The CPs had to rank ten statements (0-10) reflecting on their self-perceptions, competences, and confidence in various aspects of English learning and teaching.

2.5.1 Class results

Overall, as learners, all classes registered an increase in confidence. The aspects of language learning with the highest degree of confidence improvement were the ability to express ideas on a variety of topics (41 per cent increase) and pronunciation (32 per cent increase).

As teachers, the classes also registered improvement. The most significant improvement in confidence was shown in setting up receptive skill activities (54 per cent increase), followed by improvement in giving feedback (38 per cent increase) and giving instructions (31 per cent increase).

It is also worth noting that the class with the lowest confidence score at the beginning of the course (3.76) was the class with the highest confidence score at the end (9.7). Reportedly, the vast majority of the CPs in this group were English language teachers. It was also one of the most advanced groups in terms of the proficiency level. The results of another class of a similar level seem to suggest that perhaps it is the more advanced learners who are actually able to reflect more critically on their language knowledge and recognise the gaps.

2.5.2 Individual results

The results yielded by the individual responses differed. Only 39 CPs provided both self-evaluations, at the beginning of the course and at the end.

When reflecting on their experience as learners the CPs noted the greatest increase in confidence in writing (18.9 per cent) and in pronunciation (6.4 per cent). Interestingly, there was one aspect of the individual self-evaluation where we registered a decrease. This was in relation to the ability to understand spoken language. The reasons for this may be two-fold. On the one hand, it is possible that the CPs did not respond as honestly in the class setting for fear of exposing weakness. On the other hand, quite a few participants mentioned in their course feedback that this was their first opportunity to interact regularly with native speakers of English, and it is possible that the exposure to different accents and speed has made the CPs recognise some gaps in their ability.

When reflecting on their confidence as teachers, the two areas of greatest confidence increase were the ability to explain grammar and vocabulary in a student-centred way (eight per cent) and the ability to set up receptive skills activities (11 per cent).

2.5.3 Staff outcomes

In addition to CPs' own self-assessment, we asked the OIEG tutors to comment on any instances or behaviour they noticed that would indicate improvement in confidence of the CPs. Most course tutors noticed improvement in communication among the CPs. One tutor commented:

Definitely more interaction with each other [...] Not just replying to my questions but commenting and responding to each other as well.

Tutors also reported that this led towards more interaction in the breakout rooms and some sharing of resources among the CPs themselves.

Another area identified by the course tutors was improvement in CPs' reflection on their language and teaching skills. At the beginning of the course, the CPs showed a lot of theoretical knowledge but could not necessarily support it with examples of classroom practice. However, by the end of the course 'participants started to ask more questions and started to open up more about their bad teaching experiences or when things did not go to plan. The group are more reflective now and this has definitely led them to be more bold in the WhatsApp group. They also started to ask why we do things a certain way.'

Last but not least, one of the course outcomes was the organic emergence of an internal community of practice among the OIEG staff.

OIEG has three language schools in the UK – Brighton, London and Oxford. The schools have a long history of independence but in 2019 they were brought under centralised management.

When staffing the PRELIM project, staff were selected from all three schools. This was done out of a necessity rather than an intention, as the teaching body across the three schools had been reduced.

The final PRELIM team consisted of Academic Managers (AM), Directors of Studies (DoS), a Senior Teacher and regular teaching staff with varying degrees of teaching and training experience.

To facilitate communication and support we set up a MS Teams PRELIM group for all involved. It was initially very much driven by me and my colleague. We posted resources, links to relevant articles, and encouraged informal feedback, especially in the early stages of the course.

By mid-to-late February the group gained a life of its own. Members started sharing their own resources and lesson plans for WhatsApp mentoring sessions. They discussed challenges and supported one another with various aspects of teaching or technology. Initially, it was the DoSs and the AMs who took the lead, but towards the end of the course, the seemingly less experienced staff also started to contribute regularly. It was rather interesting to observe that certain managerial hierarchy was removed and, despite the difference in roles and experience, the overall tone of the communication was very much peer-to-peer.

Key learning points

The three key learning points I have identified are as follows.

- The early stages of recruitment and course design require more time. The very nature of this project is so unique and original that for many it might be difficult to grasp its full potential and impact. If we truly want to cater for participants' needs and context it is essential that there is sufficient time to explain the project to all prospective participants, and especially to those who are hard to reach, whether in a geographic or socio-economic sense.
- Looking back the experience as a whole, I also wonder whether a longer but less intense course would have benefited the participants a little bit more. While we have received overwhelmingly positive feedback, it became clear that 4.5 hours of input was a significant time commitment on the participants' part. Also, it was not until later in the course that we started noticing changes in language and attitude, at which point it was time to say goodbye.
- Finally, I would like to acknowledge the internal impact a project like this can have on an organisation. It has been an enriching and eye-opening experience for all involved, which has certainly shaped how we may approach future internal CPD initiatives or new programme development.

India

Project background

AINET Project Managers

Dr Amol Padwad, Dr Krishna Dixit and Ms Swapna Yadaf

IH London Project Manager

Pauline Loriggio

Teachers

Ali Kemp, Jessica Marshall, Nick Lidwell and Katherine Moynihan



Figure 1: Some of the Course Participants (CPs) with teacher Jess Marshall

1. Working in partnership with AINET and IH London

The Association of English Teachers (AINET), a registered (not-for-profit) charity, has been working for teacher development in India since 2011. AINET has a nationwide network of teachers who work in varied contexts, from ‘remote rural areas to elite urban zones.’ There are around 200 official members (those with a paid membership) with a further 500 (non-paying educators) benefitting through their network and from their developmental activities. AINET is an affiliate of IATEFL and works with the British Council and a variety of other academic institutions and education authorities. The primary focus of the association is to create opportunities for professional learning for teachers and to work towards quality English language education for students. It is a community of people who are interested in teaching and learning in India, from teachers to publishers. This made AINET an ideal partner for the PRELIM project.

International House London (IHL) is a teaching and training institution, established in 1953, based in Central London. IHL delivers a wide range of General English and exam preparation courses, including IELTS, OET and Cambridge Mainsuite exams. The training department offers pre-service and in-service teacher training qualifications such as CELTA, Delta as well as short CPD courses for practising teachers and bespoke training programmes. There is also a Modern Languages, Younger Learner and Executive English department. Since the pandemic, IHL’s teachers and trainers have become proficient at delivering all courses online.

In our initial meeting our aim was to get a clear understanding of the context, the needs of the participants and of any constraints. We successfully discussed:

- The best way to communicate throughout the project with AINET and the course participants
- Technological capabilities of the group and the best way to deliver the courses
- The level and needs of the teachers and how we will collect this data
- Designing a course based on the understanding of the needs, context and level of the CPs
- Course objectives/learning outcomes
- Monitoring/testing of progress
- Data collection
- Certificates at the end of the course
- Two other meetings before the start date of the course in January to confirm course design/start date and number of participants and to further discuss expectations and course outcomes
- Successful joint application to apply for Connectivity funding for course participants
- Carrying out more diagnostic testing (length of experience, context, professional goals, language needs, self-assessment of level/topics they would be interested in/levels of confidence)

2. Key features of the context

- Low resource
- Mixture of primary and secondary school CPs. Some CPs working with tribal and marginalised communities and untouchables, most working for State or public schools
- Majority of CPs had five to ten years' teaching experience
- Farmers' mass protests in Haryana and Punjab disrupted travel with road and rail blocks
- Schools re-opening in January after lockdown in India meant teachers were not as available as they first thought; some then accessed the course on their commute
- Most CPs said they would be accessing the course individually through their mobile phone; a minority accessed it through a laptop
- Their class sizes typically ranged from 30 to 80 students (average around 55) with some as low as five and a few as high as 180
- CPs would be attending the course after their working day
- Participants and family members affected by COVID-19 (contracting the disease or dealing with bereavement)
- Poorer connectivity for those in more remote areas
- In some areas, the children have to cope with schooling in at least three languages: their mother tongue, the state language and Hindi, with all the school-leaving exams in English

Learning outcomes: *From our meetings we were able to establish the goals and expectations of the project, the timeline and, importantly, develop a working relationship with the project leaders.*

Issues and misunderstandings

AINET did a heroic job in getting the numbers down from the initial response of 1,400 CPs to around 75 in total and we divided the groups into four (average of 20) according to level and time preference. Coordinating with AINET we then secured a more detailed profile of the CPs.

One issue was low participation, with an average uptake of around eight per class. A useful strategy was giving AINET access to our registers so they could follow up and contact non-attendees. This had an impact but only around 50 per cent of each group regularly attended (see contextual features for possible reasons for this). One positive outcome was that teachers were able to deliver a more personal and rewarding experience.

The teachers' response for sporadic attendance for some CPs was to create a class/course Padlet, which became the class record, diary and reflection space so CPs could reference this during and beyond the course (see examples below from Jessica Marshall and Katherine Moynihan's groups).

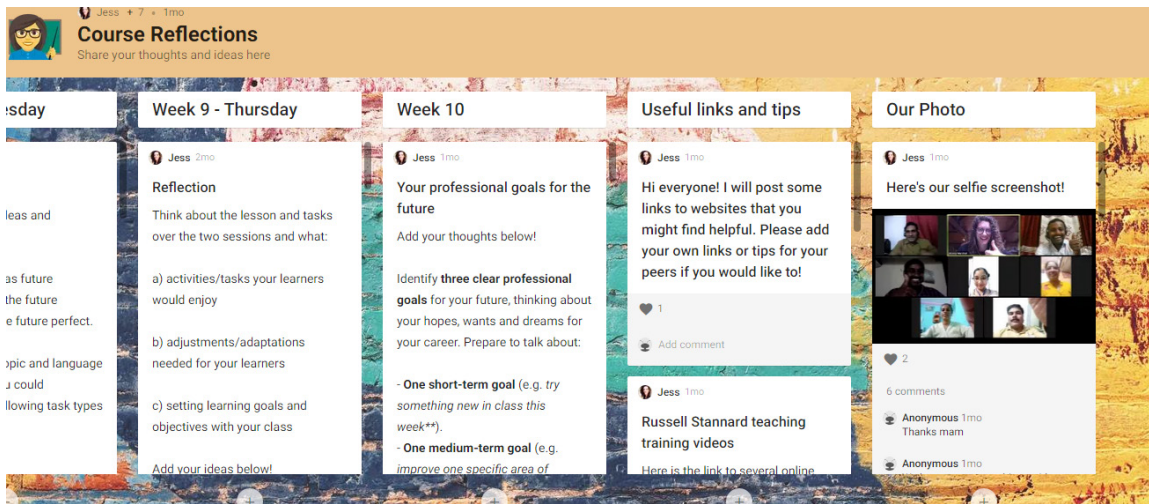


Figure 2: course reflections on Padlet from Jessica Marshall's group <https://padlet.com/jessicamarshall6/n6bc2ce1hr8lvyog>

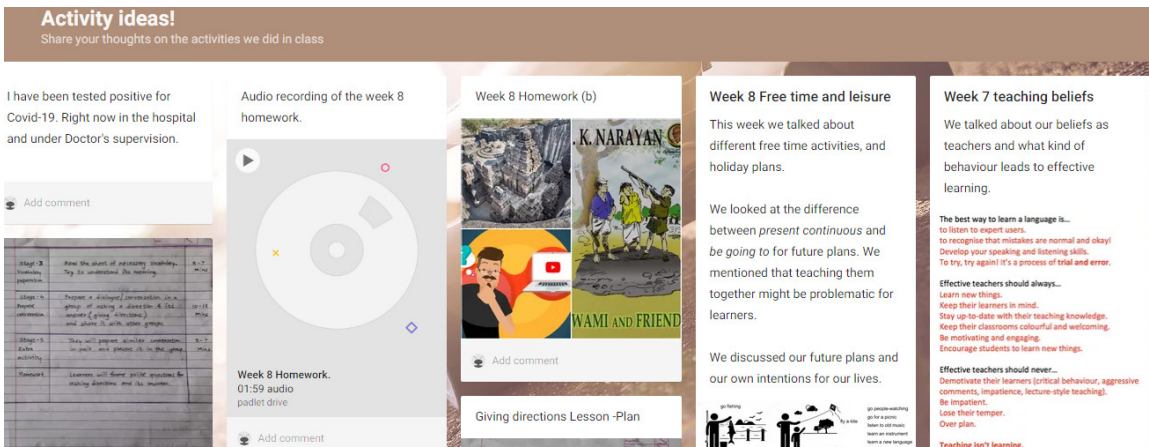


Figure 3: course reflections on Padlet from Kezzie Moynihan's group <https://padlet.com/kezziemoynihan/crpzi2wqlkrwicjp>

The course design was targeted at A2/B1 with some crossover for B2 for both Primary and Secondary CPs. A key course outcome was to improve language competency and fluency to increase confidence in their English classroom. However, CPs were at a much higher level in some cases (B2 and above), and this meant that there was a much greater demand for pedagogical training than our initial brief. IHL trainers responded by using the course material as a springboard for discussion and, while still delivering the class material, then allowed more time for analysing the activities and approaches that they had used. The trainer would facilitate this discussion during the sessions and combine practice with theory and methodology to provide a richer and, crucially, more relevant learning experience. The CPs were able to discuss and explore how they could use the materials and key concepts in their own context and were encouraged to try out sessions/ideas, etc, and feedback to the group. This became one of the successes of the course and illustrated the collaboration between the trainers and the CPs.

Another example of this was the issue of teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) v English as Lingua Franca (ELF), which particularly challenged two trainers. Both were able to openly discuss this with the CPs and it was a valuable learning point for us (see **Appendix 1**).

Learning outcomes: Our trainers thought they would have delivered a better course with a more stable cohort of CPs and believed that a minimum attendance and course outlines should have been specified from the start. The course was advertised on AINET's website as a course to enhance English (www.theainet.net) but there were no clear expectations for methodology. For future courses, we would offer more CPD on English as a lingua franca or how to help CPs develop their language without imposing British English on them.

3. Working within the CoPs

This has been a really valuable resource to gain a greater understanding of the other partners and how they approached this type of project. It was very useful to know that other partners were experiencing similar issues and how they were dealing with them. This was particularly useful in the setting-up phase.

Use of Slack as a communication channel and to access useful links to materials was invaluable: it allowed us to share information on context, needs analysis and course design. We held regular helpful and supportive Zoom meetings with project leads to discuss attendance, approach and adapting course design.

Working with the Cote d'Ivoire group project leader and team

- Close working partnership with the project leader, Jo Stansfield, and IH teachers who were teaching in Cote d'Ivoire
- Weekly joint meetings for teachers delivering to exchange lesson ideas, stories, concerns and support each other
- Adaptation and relevance of course material; we shared the same teaching materials
- We discussed wider issues of sustainability and what sort of English is appropriate for the context (especially in India)
- Development of a folder on the shared drive for teachers to drop in articles or materials
- Meetings were summarised with action points
- Shared ideas and information from the CoP/Slack

Teachers were positive about the weekly meetings and enjoyed working with a team of teachers, finding it refreshing to have a different dynamic and focus. One said that is *'not often that colleagues are delivering the same material and able to bounce ideas around with my peers with regards to how we'd use the materials, and how we could adapt them to suit our participants.'*

Learning outcomes: It was helpful to have the two groups of teachers learning from and supporting each other, especially in the beginning when we were all getting to know the nature of the course and the participants' expectations. Our weekly meetings were key to collaborating throughout the project.

4. Working with the CPs

Overall, there were 19 female and 16 male participants who regularly attended across the four groups. All the CPs participated professionally and with enthusiasm, taking part in all the activities and class discussions. IHL trainers collaborated successfully with the CPs by negotiating the course content and outcomes throughout the ten-week period. There was a focus on unpacking, encouraging reflection and analysis of materials, tasks and approach, which was not part of the initial course design to meet the needs of the groups, illustrating a collaborative working relationship (see **Appendix 3**).

One CP said at our final leaving Ceremony how the course has been particularly important to her and her colleagues during the pandemic and delivering online courses had shown how to make their classes more interactive and motivating for their students, who were struggling in lockdown.

5. Designing/delivering the course

The course was designed for primary and secondary teachers across India and would ideally (but not exclusively) attract those in more remote areas who may not normally have access to training. AINET stated that due to the massive increase in online engagement in the last six months, there was considerable familiarity with platforms like Zoom and Google Meet, so we agreed to deliver the course synchronously on Zoom, as our teachers were more familiar with this platform. The course was delivered twice a week synchronously (two sessions of 90 minutes) over ten weeks with practical or reflective homework tasks.

A key principle of the course was to keep topics relatable and relevant for mainstream primary and secondary teaching, so tasks could be adapted for and applied to their context. The syllabus was communicative, rather than grammar led with a task-based/communicative outcome.

The course was designed for the trainer to demonstrate how lessons can be generated from the learner with no support from published materials, recognising that the participants would be working in a low-resource environment, and we did not want to impose Euro-centric published course material on the groups. Recordings were generated by the teacher (e.g. live listening). CPs were encouraged to make the use of their own physical surroundings (take photos on their phones and send via WhatsApp) and use simple drawings for classroom material. Visuals played a key part in establishing contexts. There was a clear language and practice focus. Each week focused on one topic area (see **Appendix 2**)

We felt that it was important to have each group working towards similar goals – even if they took different routes to get there. For this reason, we built in assessment weeks four, seven and ten of the course. In these sessions CPs were asked to do a presentation or demonstrate something they had learnt or been able to use in their own classroom practice from the previous weeks. This would provide CPs with an opportunity to share and reflect.

Language was taught in context and CPs were introduced to the communicative classroom. Pair and group work was encouraged in breakout rooms throughout. This was a challenge for some participants who were more used to lecture-style or crowd-management classrooms.

Learning outcomes: The teachers at IHL who had little training experience needed more time to understand their own teaching approach/teaching beliefs and what was being required from them. The positive outcome of this was that, through collaboration and support, teachers overcame this challenge and became more confident in training teachers.

6. Course outcomes/recommendations

IHL's work with AINET has brought several positive outcomes:

- The training and development of IHL's teachers and trainers in India developed our teachers' confidence and skillset and has encouraged us to seek similar courses in the future. IHL trainers have been supporting, mentoring and learning from one another throughout the project, sharing ideas, activities and materials. We had weekly meetings to encourage peer and offer PM support. These sessions were helpful in cascading knowledge and understanding the context of the delivery. Three of the four trainers had very limited or no experience training other teachers and they have now stated they would love to take part in this type of training again. This feeds into their own CPD but also means, as an organisation, we now have a more diverse workforce (see **Appendix 4**).
- For future projects we would hope to have a course planned that matched the initial brief, as this one had to be adapted, primarily by the teachers. It would have been useful to know the CPs' teaching beliefs and what expectations they had from the course before they began. Teachers felt the CPs should have had a course outline before the course and minimum attendance specified.
- As a learning experience we would need to prepare both CPs and IHL teachers before a similar course, so that all understand that different 'Englishes' have evolved across the globe (80 per cent of speakers of English use ELF). English, as the lingua franca in India, may vary from 'British English' but the latter is not to be seen as the 'pure' and 'correct' English.

- The CPs and AINET commented very positively on the end-of-course certificates, which we devised to reflect the learning outcomes of each participant, rather than just a certificate of attendance. Given that some CPs were unable to attend some sessions, we wanted to make sure that their achievements were recorded and celebrated, reflecting the teacher training aspects of the course (see **Appendix 5**).
- The joint weekly catch-up meetings with the teachers from Cote d'Ivoire and India with the IHL project managers was recognised by the teachers as another success of this project. They felt supported and encouraged throughout. In turn, the project managers felt supported by the NILE project management team. Perhaps, in future, buddy teacher groups could be considered.
- During the process, many CPs developed their teacher training skills, delivering sessions/ materials adapted to their regional context – one of our key aims of the course. CPs particularly saw the value of using visuals, breakout rooms and a more communicative approach to enhance their delivery (see **Appendix 6**). In the verbal feedback at the 'Graduation Ceremony', CPs told AINET that they would welcome future collaborative projects to enhance their development. They stated that they would welcome a continuation course to explore more teaching methods/approaches and how to further adapt materials. The CPs said they will set up a WhatsApp group to continue to share their experiences, professional development and to stay in touch.

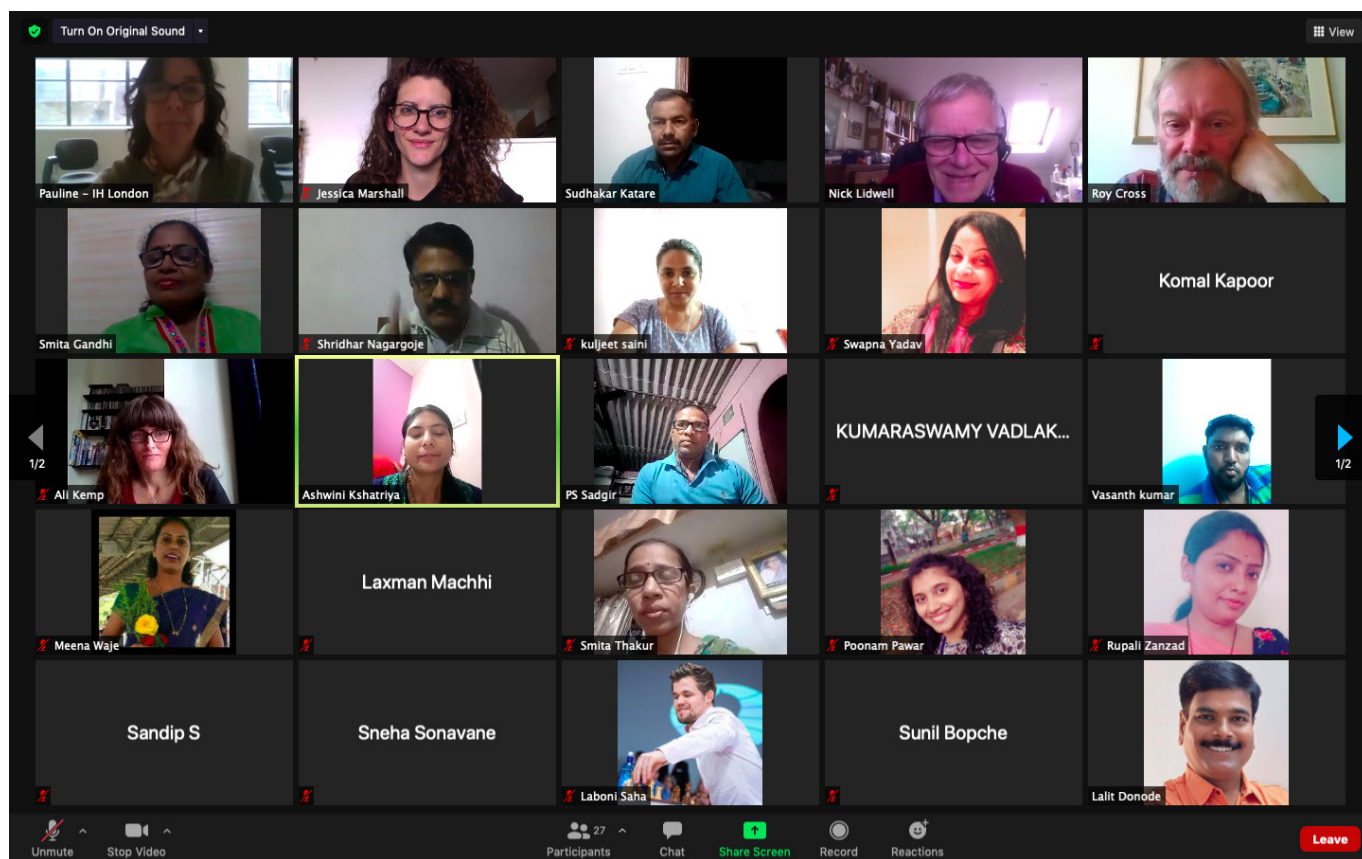


Figure 4: Graduation ceremony for the CPs in India (21/04/2021)

Appendix 1

Teacher 1: *It came up in my group in that some CPs implied that British English was 'real' English. When it became clear to me that there were differences between British English and Indian English, we started to discuss the differences in use of the language. I found this difficult at the start but then those discussions became part of our sessions. They were all keen to improve their language skills but I didn't always know how to manage this when I'm used to teaching British English rather than lingua franca.*

Teacher 2: *'Graduation ceremony' for the CPs in India. 14/04/2021. As a white British person, I had some levels of discomfort about teaching 'English' to a group of teachers who had many more years of experience than me, and who also came from a country where English is an official language. The colonial history between India and Britain is fraught with abuse, and there were many times I felt uncomfortable about the connotations of cultural and linguistic imperialism. As a result, I was very keen throughout the course to underline the idea that 'British' English was not the goal, but communicative, global English. In addition, the participants were very keen on discussing this with me, and hopefully that managed to mitigate any harm that I could have caused, however incidental.*

Teacher 3: *I think what I will take away from this experience the most is that I was exposed, for the first time, to a group of CPs who speak a different English to me. I learned a lot about Indian English but sometimes struggled to understand when to 'correct' or not. The CPs wanted to develop their language so much but it was sometimes unclear to me how to help. As an example, use of articles. The CPs almost universally weren't using them and I didn't know how to approach this. Also present continuous/going to for future plans, all the CPs used will and although some were aware of present can't/going to, they naturally wouldn't use it. I'd like to develop my understanding of this, as I think it is broader issue within the context of English language teaching.*

Appendix 2

Week 5 – Nature and the environment
(the first and the last stage)

Outcomes = By the end of the lesson CPs will be better able to talk about climate change around the world, using past simple and 'used to', and take part in a mini debate to decide an initiative in context.

Stage	Procedure	Time	Suggested materials	Notes/comments
Topic introduction, revision of previous vocabulary and freer speaking practice	Screenshare App 1 before and after pictures. Ask CPs to tell you what they can see in each picture to identify changes and ask CPs to add reasons/causes if they can.	10 mins	App 1	Encourage CPs to recycle landscape/nature and weather words from the previous lesson. Optional = Put CPs into breakout rooms to talk about the pictures and feedback together.
Reflection task – adaptation and application	Ask CPs to think about their classes and learners and to think about environmental projects they could do with their classes/schools and share their ideas in the chat box. Feedback	5 mins 10 mins		Support = Suggest some mini-initiatives for schools to help/begin CPs thinking. e.g. – plastic reduction/school garden etc...

Appendix 3

This is an example from the group Padlet from one class: Week two

Really helpful reflections, everyone! It's s great to see you already thinking practically about how you can apply these tasks to your own classrooms, I'm interested to hear how the listening task went!

We will be focusing more on applying tasks to your own teaching and sharing what worked with your learners.

Several of you have specifically mentioned the use of pictures as well as the communicative element of the breakout rooms – is this something you already do with your learners? Do you do anything different?

I look forward to hearing about your own teaching and ideas as the course progresses :)

From a CP

It is great pleasure to share my personal experience with you about the second week learning with with you. I would like to adopt the activity “What do you see in the picture?” in my classroom teaching because it will very helpful for students to identify the image and do the job of brainstorming in the minds of pupils. This activity will help to create curiosity among students to learn something new. This activity will encourage students to involve actively individually in the process of learning.

The second week learning through this project specially with Jessica Teacher was very joyful, interested and interactive. I learnt new many things specially the British words and American word, e.g. flat, apartment.

Appendix 4

Feedback from an IHL trainer

I really enjoyed the experience of facilitating the development of other teachers, particularly those from another part of the world with very different experiences from my own. It was an eye opener to me and I learned a lot from them about their various teaching contexts, as well as life and culture in India.

I learned how to adapt to the group and negotiate their needs, which differed from the course I thought I'd be teaching and doing this with my colleagues was really gratifying.

Appendix 5

Course outcomes selected according to each CP's individual's achievements:

NAME

attended a teacher development and language course delivered by International House London in collaboration with CINELTA, the British Council, IATEFL and EnglishUK.

During the course, XXX...

- 1 Created a set of materials for use in the classroom
- 2 Reflected on features of best classroom practice
- 3 Participated in demonstrations of activities and language exercises
- 4 Contributed teaching ideas to group discussion
- 5 Completed reflective and practical homework tasks
- 6 Delivered presentations to peers on aspects of language teaching
- 7 Acted as teacher and student during micro-teaching activities
- 8 Developed strategies for giving learners and peers constructive feedback
- 9 Analysed features and variations of English language use for the classroom
- 10 Developed confidence in using online teaching platforms e.g., zoom

Appendix 6

Feedback from CPs:

My expectations before starting the course was that it could contain more number of students from various parts of India. But, only few turned up. I thought that this would be a conventional class but my teacher made so much of efforts to turn it into an interactive and lively session. I learnt more than I expected to learn.

I began to understand how contextual learning would be more helpful in terms of learning Grammar. The use of incorporating the day-to-day activities in the tasks helped me understand how students learn more effectively. I also learnt that "Everything needs Practice."

I think the course is perfectly structured with the varied range of topics that includes grammar and vocabulary. More conversation-based activities can be included in the syllabus. I love our group activities and would love to conduct it for my students.

My favourite part of the course was sharing the ideas and activities that each teacher has done in the following class. I began to learn the various methods of teaching English by involving in the activities. The last teaching lesson which Kezzie ma'am asked us to do boosted our confidence and her feedback also helped us a lot.

I am speechless to share my own experience about learning with Jessica and my peers. Thanks International House London and AINET for that. The way of teaching, time management for discussion, and convenient atmosphere for learning and teaching was amazing! I never experienced such online lessons before. All participants participation was superb. They always encourage to each other for speaking. Thank you, friends, for your contribution. Without your participation, this fantastic thing was never happened. Jessica Ma'am's teaching always motivated, taught something new which we surely will used in our classroom teaching.

I request to AINET and INTERNATIONAL HOUSE LONDON to give one more opportunity for learning. I HOPE WE WILL MEET SOON.

Thank you again AINET, INTERNATIONAL HOUSE and MY DEAR COLLEAGUES !!! 🌈

Cameroon

Project background

1. Description of the partners

CELT is a family-owned private language school, established in 1989, which pre-COVID-19 primarily delivered General English and IELTS training to adults plus Young Learners (YL) programmes. Since 2018, the school has been more involved in teacher development and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. CELT was already involved in delivering online learning before COVID-19 and has experienced further development in this area in the past year.

www.celt.co.uk

CABITA (Cameroon Bilingual Letters Teachers Association) is the English teacher association in Cameroon supporting bilingual teachers (French and English). It promotes the professional development needs of its members face-to-face and online, mostly using Facebook and WhatsApp. At the time of its PRELIM application, CABITA had 221 subscribing members, who pay a small annual membership fee. CABITA is a not-for-profit association with an elected committee which runs the association and its services. It is clear from the CABITA Facebook page that it is an active association:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/917376055282472/>

2. Key features of the context

Three contextual features are considered significant:

- a) **Plurilingual landscape**
CABITA's members are Francophone with varying degrees of English proficiency. The use of French in the English classroom is discouraged but is used where necessary.
- b) **Impact of COVID**
This restricted asynchronous self-study time available to five hours per week.
- c) **Infrastructure**
Internet access is generally via mobile devices and their networks, and this is relatively expensive. The additional costs were covered by the British Council Connectivity fund of £500. However, an unreliable electricity supply affected attendance for a number of CPs.

Cohort	Teachers who started the course	Teachers who completed the course	Male/Female Ratio	Urban/Rural Ratio
Cohort 1	49	33	17:16	15:18
Cohort 2	42	37	11:26	20:17
TOTALS	91	70	28:42	35:35

3. Outline of the course and rationale

The course was designed in response to the needs analysis and level testing outcomes carried out by CABITA and CELT (see Course design section below)

2 x 5-week courses for CABITA and non-CABITA members

Language levels B2+

Aim: to develop confidence by focusing on functional classroom language and provide opportunities to activate this target language and reflect on its impact.

The agreed approach was an 80/20 split of asynchronous input (delivered via Edmodo and WhatsApp) and live Zoom lessons. Based on anticipated CP availability, asynchronous content was designed to provide approximately five hours of guided self-study per week; the live lessons consisted of a 60-minute live lesson delivered on Zoom on Wednesday evenings and repeated on Thursdays. These live lessons were designed as Janus moments, looking back over and activating content from the previous week and looking forward to new content for the forthcoming week. These were recorded and the recordings were forwarded to CABITA to be shared in Cameroon to participants who were unable to join the live lesson.

The content areas were as follows (See Designing/ delivering the Course for our rationale):

Content Area	
1	Metaphors for teaching Teacher language for instruction-checking questions
2	Teacher language for concept-checking questions
3	Teacher language for warmers and starters
4	Teacher language for presenting new language
5	Putting it together: Individual or group presentations of a lesson plan which illustrates the use of warmers/starters, presentation of new language and ICQs plus CCQs

Project findings

1. Working in partnership

There was a good working relationship between CELT and CABITA, which was the outcome of a series of initial live meetings on Zoom. These were organised in order to find out about each other, our respective contexts, course needs and wants and to agree roles for the programme.

These regular Zoom meetings continued throughout the project and covered areas such as the local teaching context, delivery of the needs and wants analysis, promotion, and recruitment activity to attract CPs plus feedback on CELT's proposals for the course design.

In the delivery phase CABITA maintained an active participation in the live lessons, encouraging activity in WhatsApp and Edmodo and in completing the various in-course and end-of-course feedback instruments.

This collaborative approach ensured that occasional challenges were dealt with effectively:

1. Committee availability and connectivity issues were met by agreeing that ideas discussed when there was 50 per cent (two out of four) of the CABITA core group in attendance would be provisionally accepted, to be followed by internal CABITA discussion to ratify the decision
2. Initial expectations of a methodology course were mediated by including this as a secondary aim, both in terms of the operationalisation of the teacher language elements and in the development of a reflective track in which CPs reflected on the how of the course delivery and then considered how this could be adapted to meet their local needs.

The CELT CABITA project was well balanced in terms of gender and CELT was mindful to ensure that all voices were heard. Likewise, CELT actively requested feedback from CABITA throughout the project to ensure good partnership working, and this could be easily incorporated across all projects to ensure gender inclusivity.

2. Working within the CoP

This was, without doubt, an area of strength for PRELIM and of immense benefit to CELT. The CELT team was already aware of CoPs, but this was the first time we had been actively involved in one on an ongoing basis.

CELT benefitted from a very supportive and very talented group of members and was able to receive guidance on areas as diverse as platforms, audio equipment and content. Slack seemed most used in the design phase although less so in the project writing phase. Perhaps providers can be encouraged to respond to a minimum number of posts in the early stages of future projects to raise awareness of the CoP's value and to encourage greater take up. One recommendation is a review of the one-person-per-institution rule: the wider CELT team would have greatly benefitted from access, even if as viewers with just one contributor. The individual update meetings with the CoP facilitators and the full CoP online meetings were a huge support, happening at just the right time to focus on the relevant issues.

So great was the impact of the CoP that CELT is intending to use our CoP PRELIM experience to create CoPs for our future fully online teacher training courses.

3. Working with the CPs

Work with the CPs began when they completed the pre-course language placement test and needs analysis, and continued throughout the course and beyond with the end-of-course feedback questionnaires.

Attendance at the live lessons was well sustained thanks to a solid nucleus of motivated learners who attended as much as they could (on average 20 CPs per week in the synchronous sessions). Numbers would have been higher had connectivity issues not hampered attendance. Other CPs dipped in and out and a minority disappeared after the end of the first live lesson.

The CPs in the second cohort were noticeably more involved in the asynchronous tasks than their Cohort 1 counterparts. This seems to have been related to the development of a learning contract and to additional support from CABITA in encouraging participation in the WhatsApp groups and on Edmodo. We therefore strongly recommend both these strategies to maximise active participation. The value of the course was clearly identified by the CPs in early bird and end-of-course feedback.

Challenges to working with the CPs were largely related to technology. We struggled to track the CPs' engagement with the asynchronous content, as Edmodo and WhatsApp do not permit automatic user tracking.

While we initially used waiting rooms as a Zoom security feature, it was very hard for the teacher of the live lessons to keep track of CPs coming and going as a result of connectivity failures: this was solved by using the "Admit All" feature and later by removing the waiting room facility completely. We also noticed an uptake in performance in breakout rooms when one of the CABITA members was present, encouraging participation.

4. Designing/delivering the course

Course design

CELT originally intended to run one ten-week course for CABITA members, with priority given at the request of the ETA to “our members with less strong English ... so that they can improve their proficiency in English”.

The scope of the course design was informed by initial discussion with CABITA.

CELT designed a two-stage needs analysis: an externally sourced General English placement test to establish level ranges and a specially written needs analysis which asked about the CPs’ confidence in teaching English and in their own language ability. It also asked about how they would access the course and access to data. We decided to make use of familiar platforms (WhatsApp to build a user community and Facebook for promotion on the CABITA page) and to introduce two new platforms (Zoom and Edmodo) for which training was provided. Our intention with this was to offer the CPs opportunities to learn new EdTech which might be beneficial in their own teaching. In this regard we were partially successful.

The needs analysis showed that the applicants had a higher proficiency and confidence level than expected. In an effort to reach the lower levels anticipated by the project, the following strategies were employed:

1. Dividing the ten-week course into two five-week courses and re-recruiting for the second cohort
2. Enlisting local pedagogical inspectors to identify lower-level teachers
3. Removing the level test (as it might have been a barrier to the less confident/proficient)

These measures proved unsuccessful in reaching the lower-level teachers and, as a result, two iterations of very similar courses were run for five weeks each. Both courses followed roughly the same material.

Course delivery

Given the relatively high level of the first cohort, a course was designed that focused specifically on developing the functional range of the teacher’s classroom language, focusing on the language required for key moments in the lesson. The first two themes, ICQs and CCQS were chosen by CELT based on their experience of teachers’ needs generally: we then surveyed the teachers with a menu of further key moments and chose the two most popular to create custom-made material for the two remaining themes (see 1.3 Course outline). In week five, CPs put all this learning together by developing a presentation of a lesson outline they were due to deliver in their own classes, which focused on all four input areas and demonstrated their learning of the newly acquired classroom language and technique they would use at those points. Input materials were delivered asynchronously using PDF worksheets and short embedded videos created on mobile phone distributed initially on WhatsApp (week one) and then on Edmodo from week two. Feedback on this asynchronous input was provided by a combination of answer keys, by moderated peer discussion on WhatsApp and comments in Edmodo. These were then summarised in the weekly live lessons

Given the success of the first five-week course and the similarity in level, the second cohort followed largely the same programme, with minor changes made as a result of feedback. More detailed Edmodo training was offered with a video guide; participants were also asked to sign a learner contract, which specified the amount of contact required each week for the purposes of end-of-course certification.

5. Course outcomes

It was pleasing to note an overall course completion rate of 76.9 per cent (Cohort 1 – 67.3 per cent; Cohort 2 – 88.0 per cent) with a higher completion level for the second cohort, where course engagement was also higher.

Feedback was also positive and collected using a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data, as follows (Quantitative data was collected using a 6-point Lickert Scale, where 6 was the most positive score)

The course had a positive impact of my confidence using English	
Cohort 1	32/33 rating 4 or higher (79 per cent 5 or higher)
Cohort 2	37/37 rating 4 or higher (92 per cent 5 or higher)
Totals	69/70 rating 4 or higher (80 per cent 5 or higher)

CP comments: I am no more stressed as before; I was scared of making mistakes in front of my students. Thanks to the course, I feel more confident and can teach a whole lesson without using French.

The course had a positive impact of my confidence teaching English	
Cohort 1	33/33 rating 4 or higher (82 per cent 5 or higher)
Cohort 2	36/37 rating 4 or higher (97 per cent 5 or higher)
Totals	69/70 rating 4 or higher (90 per cent 5 or higher)

CP comments: It is my first year of teaching, my first experience in a rural area and the course has really helped me to move forward. My teaching has greatly improved. I now see the enthusiasm with which my students participate in my lessons.

Overall, the course had a positive impact of my teaching	
Cohort 1	33/33 rating 4 or higher (88 per cent 5 or higher)
Cohort 2	37/37 rating 4 or higher (92 per cent 5 or higher)
Totals	70/70 rating 4 or higher (90 per cent 5 or higher)

CP comments: My method teaching has improved, because I understand students better than before.

Thanks to PRELIM, CPs felt empowered, more confident and, crucially, a direct impact on their learners was achieved. We can also see a trend whereby the satisfaction rates for Cohort 2 were across the board higher than the already good feedback from Cohort 1. We can speculate that this relates to the greater levels of engagement in the asynchronous learning, leading to a positive washback. We recommend therefore that future courses seek to maximise engagement with learner agreements and active facilitation of asynchronous tasks.

The feedback questionnaire also surveyed the use of technology:

Zoom was a useful tool for the live lessons (comment here on Zoom, not connectivity issues)	
Cohort 1	33/33 rating 4 or higher (88 per cent 5 or higher)
Cohort 2	36/37 rating 4 or higher (88 per cent 5 or higher)
Totals	69/70 rating 4 or higher (88 per cent 5 or higher)

CP comments: Very interesting to exchange with others using videos. Live lessons are amazing; a great discovery, really great as live classroom tools.

Edmodo was a useful tool for the asynchronous lessons (comment here on Edmodo, not connectivity issues)	
Cohort 1	26/33 rating 4 or higher (51.5 per cent 5 or higher)
Cohort 2	33/37 rating 4 or higher (78 per cent 5 or higher)
Totals	69/70 rating 4 or higher (65 per cent 5 or higher)

CP comments: It was marvellous because you can get all kind of files, i.e. PDF, Word, audio, video; new for me and not easy to adapt.

WhatsApp groups were a useful tool for sharing ideas	
Cohort 1	30/33 rating 4 or higher (79 per cent 5 or higher)
Cohort 2	31/37 rating 4 or higher (92 per cent 5 or higher)
Totals	69/70 rating 4 or higher (76 per cent 5 or higher)

CP Comments: WhatsApp is very common to us so it is always with fun that we exchange ideas of this platform; my group was a little bit calm.

Feedback on the perceived usefulness of EdTech was therefore rated slightly lower than improved confidence levels. Pleasingly, the figures for Zoom were highest, suggesting that the teachers see Zoom favourably. WhatsApp is second, and Edmodo third. More thought also needs to be given to the way unfamiliar EdTech is introduced and the benefit of bilingual guides to encourage adoption. As one CP commented, 'Teachers should be more trained on the use of online resources'.

Overall, I rate this course	
Cohort 1	31/33 rating 4 or higher (85 per cent 5 or higher)
Cohort 2	37/37 rating 4 or higher (92 per cent 5 or higher)
Totals	68/70 rating 4 or higher (90 per cent 5 or higher)

CP comments: It was just wow for me because it was a wonderful and unforgettable experience. The equity of teaching and the commitment of trainers was fantastic.

This data suggests that PRELIM achieved its aims in the eyes of both the ETA and the CPs and that overall satisfaction as also high. Overall, our data could be richer, particularly in terms of accurate tracking of individual learner engagement, but we are satisfied that it does capture the course's short-term impact. We believe anecdotally that we delivered a clear message about the value of translanguaging, although there is little evidence of this from the live lessons, Edmodo and WhatsApp, where all interactions were completed in English, probably due to the levels of the CPs.

CABITA outcomes

... it was a very enriching experience for CABITA members who had the opportunity to follow the course from the beginning to the end.

The diversified use of technology helped many participants to complete the course in one way or another. For instance, participants who couldn't follow the live Zoom meetings could catch up with the recorded sessions. Those who couldn't work on Edmodo could follow up on Zoom.

The course was very interactive and the course content was also appropriate. Participants greatly appreciated and were very grateful for such a wonderful course.

I so much appreciate the fact of always requesting my view in important decisions to be taken during the project. This has helped me in being more targeted and objective in my relationship with other participants. And, consequently, to create a spirit of professionalism.

I appreciate the relationship I had with CELT. It was a very professional but so personal one. The CELT team is just wonderful.

Suggestions:

1. Initial training in the use of the platforms
2. A course module on the Cameroon syllabus
3. An end-of-course assessment being a prerequisite for the issue of end-of-course certificates

3. Key learning points

Increased confidence and expertise

PRELIM was the first time CELT had successfully provided a course for the British Council as a result of an application process. This in itself, plus the positive feedback from the CPs and the ETA during and at the end of the course, have all increased our confidence, not least in being able to offer courses outside our main areas (Europe) and fully online. Of note is that we are already awaiting sign-off for a contact to provide a fully online teacher development programme for vocational teachers in the Middle East, which we won through competitive tender as a result of our experience with PRELIM.

Reverse learning

The PRELIM project afforded CELT an opportunity to understand a technical environment far different from ours. We learnt a great deal about how to embrace these differences and, in an example of reverse learning, CELT discovered from CABITA how to make use of WhatsApp in its teaching.

Indirect learning

A number of CPs commented on the benefits of learning how to use Zoom and Edmodo but generally needed considerable support, particularly with Edmodo. Written joining guides (and for Cohort 2 video walk throughs) were provided in English: future groups will benefit from these guides being translated into the CPs' L1.

Course sustainability

It was agreed with the ETA that CABITA would set up two new WhatsApp groups, one for each cohort, in order to maintain the momentum created by PRELIM. At the time of writing, this is still pending. There is a danger that PRELIM will become little more than a moment in time and greater thought could be given to measuring impact during the lifetime of the course plus 6 and 12 months afterwards.

Course timing

Many UK providers have relatively long Christmas closures (CELT closes for three weeks), meaning the course design phase was interrupted by a long break. It would be ideal if future projects did not coincide with Christmas closures, as these lead to a loss of momentum.

Appendix

Key CELT staff

Neil Harris	PRELIM Manager Main course developer and second live lesson teacher for Course 1 (Teacher Trainer and Director of Marketing)
Mike Burden	Assistant course developer and main live lesson teacher (Courses 1 and 2) (Director of Studies)
Grace Durighello	Assistant course developer and third live lesson teacher for Course 1 (Co-owner and Director)

Key CABITA committee members

CABITA President	Achile Mafouen Talle
CABITA Vice-President	Marceline Atangana
Secretary	James Zih Cum
Public Relations Officer	Nnane Anna Ntube

Cote D'Ivoire

Project background

Descriptions of the partners

1. International House London (IHL). An independent, highly-respected English language teaching and teacher training institution established in 1953, based in central London. IHL delivers general English teaching, exam-focused teaching (e.g. towards IELTS, OET and Cambridge main suite), pre-service and in-service teacher training qualifications CELTA and DELTA, as well as short CPD courses for practising teachers and bespoke training programmes, held in London, in-country and online. IHL also has a strong Modern Languages department.
2. CINELTA. The nationwide English language teachers' association for Cote D'Ivoire with over 1,000 members across the country. CINELTA has participated in/driven a number of teacher development projects over the years to support its members and promote good practice. It was due to host the Africa TESOL conference just as the pandemic hit.

Key features of the context

- Low resource
- Large classes
- Problematic broadband/internet connection or coverage
- Regular strikes/protests from teachers and some civil unrest
- Centralised education system: managed by the Ministry of Education
- Primarily primary and secondary school teachers on the programme
- Official national language is French; several local languages
- Widespread WhatsApp usage; less use of email

Outline of the course and rationale

The course/project was aimed at teachers from CINELTA without much previous professional development and with low-level English productive ability; to develop participant confidence using communicative English, with an emphasis on fluency and classroom interactive competence.

Project findings

1. Working in partnership

Collaboration in the design and organisation of the course programme was straightforward, facilitated by fortnightly meetings between project leads at IHL and CINELTA.

- Points of immediate agreement: starting date (later pushed back at the request of the ETA because of Christmas), course length, number of participants, use of Zoom
- Timings – discussions on 2x90 minutes or 1x180 minutes led to agreement on the former for pedagogical reasons, i.e. too long on Zoom, and these would be held on weekdays
- Swift gathering of information from participants by CINELTA, organisation into four groups by CINELTA requested formal invitation to the Ministry and to the participants – this was done and delivered before Christmas
- Joint application for funding agreed together, co-written, submitted: successful
- Week 2/3 appeal to CINELTA re attendance issues: dealt with swiftly with good results
- Closing ceremony: 19 April at 4pm (see Appendix 1)

The initial fortnightly meetings were held on Zoom, meaning that negotiation was immediate and immediately resolved. Face-to-face meetings meant that as project leads we got to know each other, were able to share wider information of the context and exchange small talk, and resulted in a friendly and warm relationship, which would not have developed if communication had been email alone.

2. Working within the CoP

As the project developed, it was apparent that there were multiple CoPs evolving. Firstly, the official CoP of project leads from different institutions around the UK; secondly, a strong CoP within the cohort of IHL teachers delivering the course to the participants.

Prelim CoP

The most useful part of the official CoP was the regular meetings that took place throughout the project. This was a great way of sharing ideas, plans and pitfall, providing and receiving reassurance and guidance, and satisfying curiosity as to what was happening elsewhere around the world. In these meetings I discovered a huge variety of course formats and delivery options that sparked hundreds of ideas – unfortunately too late or too disparate to be implemented with CINELTA, but which can be investigated for future projects.

While Slack was less helpful to me personally as a project lead, this was obviously very beneficial to others. It is a great organisational online tool with multiple functionality for sharing and the channels were all relevant. It supported the above-mentioned meetings and was a quick way of getting answers to questions, contributing to working Google docs and getting links to articles and webinars.

Within the CoP though, having a close working relationship with one other project lead, Pauline Loriggio, was invaluable in order to share ideas and course/project vision, provide and receive immediate support and encouragement, offer reminders, hold joint meetings and just being able to check everything is going ok.

In summary, when it comes to management of a CoP my findings are that having the close range/ mid-range/distant communication options provided 360 coverage of all the elements, but were also in that order of usefulness to me as a project lead.

IH London CoP

The teachers self-selected to be involved in the project in order to work with a very different context to the one that they are used to. They ranged from being CELTA-qualified to DELTA-qualified to new CELTA trainer to very experienced DELTA trainer. One is doing her MA in Applied Linguistics, one started the project actually being based in another sub-Saharan country, one has extensive YL experience. It was this range of experience and backgrounds that contributed to the success of the project, as they could all bring strengths and insights to the table.

The teachers on the project really thrived in ways they hadn't previously imagined. They all put this down to the 'community of practice' within IHL: the collaboration and weekly meetings (see Appendix 2). As project leads, we set no agenda for these meetings, billed solely as a 'catch-up', giving the teachers a safe space and freedom to raise anything they saw as relevant: stories of the CPs and how they were attending the course (from the bus or a taxi, chickens in the background, a shared mobile phone); difficulties related to connectivity and how this affected lesson delivery; suitability of the material; context-related challenges and discussions of real and relevant language for the CPs. This led to the development of their own materials to supplement the course, and we set up a shared drive repository for articles, worksheets and reflections, at the teachers' request. At no point did a project lead dictate or drive an agenda: all of the suggestions originated from the teachers themselves. This was very empowering for the teachers.

The teachers commented that they had never worked so closely with a group of teachers before – the label of 'project' had a huge impact, as it implies a shared goal, a set of outcomes with visible steps towards them. The project bonded the team, and made us all realise the value of teamwork in achievement. This is something to be developed further: that teaching or training is not simply teaching or training, it is a project of development and growth.

3. Working with the CPs

The participants were majority male: 48 men versus 13 women.

Teachers picked up on CPs' real needs quickly and were therefore able to adapt and reconfigure material accordingly. Key to this was the integration of reflection tasks and follow-up asynchronous work via Padlet (e.g. <https://padlet.com/fenelladale1/ourclass>), as well as finding an alternative to Zoom when the connection broke down (see Appendix 3)

Teachers noticed that, although the CPs were enjoying aspects of the syllabus as originally designed, it was the unpacking of approach, discussion of tasks and activities and analysis of material and lesson design that really motivated them. Many of the CPs had never really shared teaching tips and ideas before or worked together as a team (much like the teachers from IHL) (see Appendix 4) and perhaps shyness accounted for some of the 'silent observers' mentioned by the teacher.

In the weekly reflection meetings, it emerged that the delivery style of the training programme was problematic. The teachers, as experienced practitioners of the communicative approach, expected to make plentiful use of breakout rooms, pairwork, groupwork and questioning. This clashed with the more traditional approach and experience of the CPs, who expected a series of lectures or non-participatory webinars. Teachers therefore needed to use the first few sessions 'training' the CPs to be communicative learners themselves. This, to an extent, slowed down or limited the material used and the outcomes achieved in every session, as communicative tasks either needed longer set up or needed to be re-set up in order to encourage (or force) collaboration. It quickly became evident that session outcomes needed to be revised to include an element of learner training.

4. Designing/delivering the course

Original course design

- Two courses: A2, B1
- Synchronous sessions with weekly asynchronous homework tasks
- Communicative syllabus rather than grammar-led, with communicative outcomes
- Topics selected to mirror an upper-primary/secondary ELT syllabus to ensure transferability
- Low resource: lots of hand-drawn pictures, mobile phone photos and audio recordings, realia and the physical surroundings, live listening
- Language contextualised
- Communicative delivery, e.g. dictation, pair- and groupwork, an element of project work and planning for outcomes

Weeks four, seven and ten were 'assessment weeks' (see Appendix 5): to review the previous weeks, explore the homework tasks and material produced and encourage peer evaluation, feedback and micro-teaching/peer demos if CPs were comfortable with this. These weeks would rely on the CP-generated material of the previous three weeks, and also would be an opportunity for them to reflect on learning and development within the course, as the course progressed.

Course delivery

The course quickly changed from being a purely language development syllabus to one with a focus on teaching and methodology. This is because 1) the CPs had much higher competency in English than anticipated (more B2 than A2) so the designed materials were under-pitched; and 2) the CPs, as practitioners, were far more interested in the how and why than the what of teaching.

The teachers delivering the course adapted quickly and resourcefully, doing the following things (see Appendix 6 for a sample):

- Using the materials as 'demo' activities or lessons for the CPs to unpack and reflect on
- Promoting discussion around tasks about the possibilities or limitations related to the CPs' own contexts
- Re-focusing the 'assessment weeks' into lesson planning, micro-teaching or synthesis tasks
- Developing materials to boost classroom interactional competency, such as focusing on language for giving feedback and suggestions, for the CPs to improve their pedagogical interactional ability to support learning and motivation of their own learners
- Introducing aspects of lesson approaches (e.g. test-teach-test or situational presentation) and critical thinking
- Overtly exploring and addressing the advantages of communicative language learning
- Sharing articles with CPs on e.g. teaching large classes

5. Course outcomes

Outcomes for the organisation

The PRELIM project has led to enormous, invaluable development within the IHL organisation. The teachers involved worked together as a group, highly collaboratively. What did they learn?

- Different perspectives and views on language, e.g. how comfortable/flexible we (IHL) are with Englishes, ELF, versus how inflexible the CPs were – strong focus on accuracy and a right/wrong approach. Also, the lack of diversity in materials (see Appendix 7)
- The challenges of ‘imposing’ a communicative approach on those who are not used to it, e.g. the difficulty of instructing peer-teaching, having a student/teacher hat
- The expectations and implications of the word ‘training’ – that it will be top-down and deductive
- Materials adaptation and design: selecting and rejecting, supplementing. Teachers happy to do this in normal teaching but in ‘training’? Finding additional material
- Need for functional, critical language structures – a distinct lack. Cultural? L1-influenced? Formative v summative feedback
- Gap within practice and training, e.g. large classes? We have very little exposure/experience of managing this
- Training features of Zoom, use of backchannels
- How much external factors can get in the way, e.g. connection, family, poverty (money-poor, time-poor), location
- Exploring feedback formats, e.g. recordings, google forms, in-lesson discussions
- Outcome-driven low-resource course design
- Beginning to question what language we use, how we use it, why we use it, whether coursebooks and course materials really address this, e.g. How do African people describe each other? Blonde??
- rRal reflection on what teachers do and why: for some this was the first time this was explored organically rather than for official assessment/qualification

Outcomes for the CPs

The following is how the project impacted on the CPs:

- CPs promoted the benefits to colleagues who had not participated or had not signed up (see Appendix 8.i)
- CPD became a topic of conversation among CPs and teachers of other subjects (see Appendix 8.ii)
- CPs felt more motivated to try new things
- CPs felt stimulated, confident – they received attention and it inspired them (see Appendix 8.iii)
- CPs saw immediate impact in their classrooms (see appendix 8.iv)
- CPs improved the use of communicative methodology and immersive learning (see Appendix 8.v)
- CPs developed their own ideas for post-course CPD (see Appendix 8.vi)

One CP group in particular, based in Abidjan, have set up their own WhatsApp group to continue sharing and discussing their lessons and teaching beyond the course.

Key learning points

- Needs analysis of CPs should be more comprehensive to include connectivity, experience with tech tools, awareness of approaches as well as a diagnostic language task. There should also be a pre-course participant contract to force the commitment.
- Course design is always going to be to a certain degree ad hoc: it needs to react and respond to developing and emerging CP needs and requests, as well as being shaped by context, so a looser framework and regular revisions need to be built in. If the CPs are teachers, they will always want methodology and teaching ideas. They cannot separate being a teacher from being a learner; they will always be wearing both hats, so all courses need to include explicit reflection and exploration of task, topic and theory.
- Developing communities of practice. Teachers working on the same material, with the same end goal and with similar context benefit hugely from teamwork: this can lead to the set up of working groups and can be encouraged throughout the organisation. Regular face-to-face (or virtual) meetings facilitate this, as well as removing the pressure of a meeting 'agenda'. Meanwhile, a 'buddy system' within a large CoP provides reassuring and supportive pairwork, a chance to test ideas and suppositions in a safe space before meeting the wider CoP.
- Providing or awarding certificates to CPs who have sporadic attendance is a challenge: we can't assume that they have chosen not to attend. The cause of non-attendance could be tech-related, permission/timetable-related, life-related ... They could be participating asynchronously instead of synchronously, or being able to hear the session but not join in. We decided to produce a certificate for everyone who had attended at least one session, but this brought up the question of fairness: should the certificate be the same for someone who attended all and someone who attended two sessions? To differentiate here, we used a drop-down list of contents/achievements that CPs had the opportunity to obtain, and the teachers selected from the list according to participant. Therefore, someone who attended most or all sessions achieved ten things, published, on the certificate (see Appendix 9.i); someone who attended only one session, got a simple statement of attendance, with no 'achievements' listed (see Appendix 9.ii).

Appendix 1: Closing ceremony on Zoom



Appendix 2: Reflection on the teamwork element from one of our teachers

2. How did you feel about working within a team of teachers? What worked for you? What didn't work?

I really liked working with Alex to plan our lessons. We took it in turn to prepare materials, which we both said was v motivating. The debriefs we sent each other post-class were also very helpful for sanity checks! I also really appreciated the group's insights and materials particularly the more explicit training mats. Friday afternoon sessions [meetings] also provided great inspiration and therapy!

Appendix 3: Email summary from a teacher regarding using a backchannel

On Monday, everyone's connection was poor so we didn't do the listening lesson I'd planned, and we just did a review session via WhatsApp instead. It was a bit 'bumpy', but interestingly, during this session, some participants who I hadn't seen connect on Zoom for weeks started to join in halfway through.

I send a summary of each session to the WhatsApp group afterwards for their reference, and it seems that a handful of them are 'silent observers' who read all these summaries but never actually join the session (most likely because of bad connection).

[...] the provided materials were not really suitable (some of them have minimum resources and the level isn't challenging enough), so we have focused on a few things, prediction tasks, concept checking, dealing with pron., PPP, controlled VS freer practice, text-based lessons ... mostly elements of teaching and techniques (especially eliciting).

Appendix 4: Lesson sample from WhatsApp commenting on teamwork

STEVE: nice example

N'DABIAN THOMAS: If I hadn't integrated this group, we wouldn't know each other

STEVE: good

VALENTIN: If I had trained with STEVE before, my lessons would be more professional.

STEVE: nice haha

N'GUIO THIERRY: If I did not attend the university of Bouaké, Kate wouldn't be my wife now

5	The world around us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • weather & nature • climate change <p>(weather vocabulary + extreme weather / describing features in nature around the world / climate change vocabulary + used to / past simple... there used to be rivers / we used to have trees, there was more rain etc... / advise = should / need to / must - we must protect trees etc...)</p>	<p>Options =</p> <p>a) Draw a picture of the natural world around your home / town / village & label it</p> <p>b) Choose two photos of two different types (ice/jungle) & record yourself describing both</p> <p>c) take photos of environmental changes you've seen in your town / village and give suggestions to help protect the environment</p>	<p>Can</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and discuss extreme and normal weather • describe the natural world in various settings from around the world • identify and describe changes to the environment • make simple suggestions / give simple advice on how to protect the environment
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Appendix 6: Feedback from an IH teacher on what they learnt

1. How has this course contributed to your own professional development? What have you learnt about teaching, language, learning and yourself during the course? Give some examples. How will you use this knowledge in the future? Do you feel more or less confident now about training and developing other teachers?

Really helpful to get experience of training and teaching in a v different context. A real out-of-comfort-zone moment that proved very fruitful.

Things I've learnt:

- *Zoom or trainee training needed more attention – I should have spent more time from the off getting trainees to understand how to contribute, discuss, behave in a BOR, etc.*
- *my instructions setting up teacher/student demos were not clear enough and I had to create videos to help explain as a follow up before they fully understood.*
- *how effective 'unplugged' lessons can be. I've adapted quite a few of Katy's mats for my own classes. Personalisation is very motivating!*
- *trainees really do respond well to playing role of student. Demonstrating tasks and techniques proved really beneficial.*

Appendix 7: Teacher recommendations regarding materials

3. If we ran a similar course, what would you change? What would you keep? Would you be interested in further projects like this?

We were able to use most of the mats [that had been] prepared.

I loved [the] materials. One thing I would change about them, however, would be to include more diverse images of people (I spent quite a bit of time replacing them) and more culturally sensitive 'everyday' pics – my group fell about laughing during the 'where I live' lesson as the houses were so separate from their context, even though I thought I'd added some typical houses from CDI. Google lies!

Appendix 8: CP feedback highlights

i)

3. Have you talked about the course to other people e.g. family, friends, colleagues. Give one example of a conversation you have had about the course.

Yes, I talked about the course to a colleague and here is the conversation we had.

Me: "hi Tanoh. Excuse me I couldn't come to the meeting yesterday. I was busy."

Colleague: "what were you busy doing?"

Me: "I had an online lessons about new teaching approach."

Colleague: "do you mean that you still need to learn how to teach?" I think that it is a waste of time."

Me: "you are wrong to think so, we all need to learn new methods to feel more confident when teaching."

Colleague: "now tell me, what change these methods has brought to your way of teaching?"

Me: "these new methods have completely changed the way I teach. Firstly I feel at ease when designing my lessons, and present things more efficiently to students, and I'm more confident during my lessons.

And the most important things is the fact that I noticed that my students are really involved in the courses now...

Colleague: "do you think that these methods can me too?"

Me: "yes, of course. And you will be a different teacher..."

ii)

3. Have you talked about the course to other people e.g. family, friends, colleagues. Give one example of a conversation you have had about the course.

I talked about the sessions to my colleague. He told me that if they could have some sessions for maths teachers, it would be nice

iii)

10. Do you feel the course has given you more confidence as a teacher? If yes, say why.

Yes because it gave me more love to teaching

iv)

5. If you answered yes, Please give examples and detail the students' reactions.

For example i divided my classes into small groups to make competitions and they were motivated

v)

5. If you answered yes, Please give examples and detail the students' reactions.

I used the Situational Approach, and my students showed a lot of enthusiasm , especially during the stage of Production where all the class was involved,even those apparently shy.

v)

9. What do you intend to do after the course to keep developing your skills?

Practise what has been taught.

Devote more time to preparation.

Exchange with other colleagues.

Organise open-classes and share experience with colleagues...

Appendix 9: Sample certificates

i) High/full attendance

April 2021

N'bon Nogbou Valentin

attended a teacher development and language course delivered by International House London in collaboration with CINELTA, the British Council, IATEFL and EnglishUK.

During the course, N'bon Nogbou Valentin...

1. Created a set of materials for use in the classroom
2. Reflected on features of best classroom practice
3. Participated in demonstrations of activities and language exercises
4. Contributed teaching ideas to group discussion
5. Completed reflective and practical homework tasks
6. Delivered presentations to peers on aspects of language teaching
7. Acted as teacher and student during micro-teaching activities
8. Developed strategies for giving learners and peers constructive feedback
9. Analysed features and variations of English language use for the classroom
10. Developed confidence in using online teaching platforms e.g., zoom

ii) Very low attendance

Something missing here?

Guinea Bissau

Project background

1. Description of the partners

The English Language Teachers Association (ELTA-GB) was set up in 2014 to improve and promote English language teaching in Guinea Bissau (hereafter GB), a country with a population of almost two million. Ali Djau is the current ELTA-GB president. There are about 200 members, teaching in the eight regions of the country.

Inlingua is a language school in Cheltenham with a teacher training section delivering Trinity Cert and Dip TESOL, CLIL and TEFL Refresher courses face-to-face and online. Four trainers (of which three are Diploma qualified) expressed an interest in delivering the course, including Philip Grace as the lead project consultant.

2. Key features of the context

English is the third foreign language taught in most GB schools, following Portuguese and French. Most children speak at least one tribal language and Creole, which is the national language of daily communication.

Teachers in GB attend a training college to qualify. However, many need to supplement their teaching income with additional jobs to support themselves and their families. The English level of the teachers in the PRELIM course was B1 and above.

Connectivity was a major issue throughout the project. According to datareportal.com only 13 per cent of the GB population were internet users in 2020, which was almost double the figure for 2019. This puts GB among the six least connected countries in the world. 99 per cent of internet users accessed social media on their phones, with Facebook and WhatsApp being the most popular apps. Wi-Fi is rare and virtually all data is pre-paid in one-week or four-week packages, and is relatively expensive. Thanks to a very generous connectivity grant by the British Council, ELTA-GB was able to buy data for course participants through the local telecom provider.

3. Outline of the course and rationale

After consultation with our partner, WhatsApp was chosen as the sole means of course delivery. Prior to PRELIM, ELTA-GB had already been making use of WhatsApp to provide CPD to teachers remotely, making it the most sensible choice for our course platform. With many phones being low-spec models with little storage, other software would also present unnecessary obstacles and require training for participants. Connection problems, limited electricity supply, the shift system in operation for schools and the issue of most teachers working other jobs meant that live online classes would probably be very difficult to arrange. The course would use the strengths of WhatsApp to foster personal and group interaction between the inlingua trainers and GB teachers, who rarely have the opportunity to interact with people outside their country.

At the suggestion of ELTA-GB, a five-week course for 75 teachers based in and around Bissau, the capital, would be followed by a second course for another 75 from more rural areas. 52 teachers completed the diagnostic test on Microsoft Forms, showing levels ranging from B1 and upwards. The form was relatively long and if their connection was lost, some teachers had to try to do it all again. Along with some other names and phone numbers forwarded by Ali, five groups of up to 15 were created, each with a trainer from inlingua.

In principle, it was agreed that if places on the course were limited, a minimum of a third of places would be reserved for female teachers. In the end, the course was not oversubscribed, but there were just six female participants.

In terms of content, each weekly unit covered a language area that teachers use frequently and would also be teaching regularly (present tenses, classroom language, the past, describing and giving advice). Units consisted of a statement of aims and one or more videos of five to ten minutes reviewing the language area and pointing to extension areas that the higher-level CPs could work on. Three to five tasks were to be completed each week. These tasks were designed to use minimal data and be relatively quick to complete when teachers had time and a connection. Most were adaptations of interactive classroom activities and the idea was to introduce ideas and techniques that teachers could use in their classes. Task types included listening, writing (via WhatsApp or on paper and send a photo), guessing games, recording speaking using the target language, picture dictations and Google Forms quizzes. Some examples are included below:


Task 3: Listening and Speaking

Listen to Daniel, an English teenager, talk about his daily routine.

- ✓ Write down the time that he does things.
- ✓ How is his day different to children in Guinea Bissau?

Other Discussion questions:


- Do you think children should have more or less time at school?
- What do children think about school?
- As a teacher, what do you think?
- What makes a good education system?

 **Record yourself** talking about the education questions above and send it *privately* to your teacher. They will record a response for you, with some feedback.






20:20 ✓

Task 4 Ranking and recording

A great way to use comparatives is to put students into groups and ask them to rank several things in order from best to worst. They have to discuss and justify their opinions.




In this task, you need to rank these jobs in order from best to worst. Then record yourself  justifying and explaining why you have put things in that order. Send your recording to your teacher (privately). You should try to speak for at least 2 minutes and use a variety of comparative structures and vocabulary.

Jobs to rank:

-  teacher
-  farmer
-  driver
-  politician
-  nurse

14:25 ✓

Task 1 Picture dictation

-  Listen to me describing a picture.
-  Draw the picture as you listen.
-  Take a picture of it and send it to the group.
- When you have all sent your pictures, I will post the original to compare.

14:24 ✓

Figure 1: example tasks

Content was prepared by the lead PRELIM consultant and forwarded to the trainers in a WhatsApp group. Trainers then forwarded the materials to their groups, personalising them where possible and encouraging interaction to create the feeling of a class or group. Trainers also gave in-depth individualised feedback, often using the record function on WhatsApp.

Project findings

1. Working in partnership

ELTA-GB, being a small association run by the president, was easy to work with. All communication was through WhatsApp, including live conversations, messaging and attached documents. With both sides willing to be flexible and try to find solutions, partnership was constructive.

A heavy burden of time and money fell on the already very busy president to try to contact teachers in the ELTA-GB. If teachers' pre-paid data lapses, or their phone breaks, is lent to another member of the family or not charged, it may be impossible to make contact. For the second cohort (which included teachers from rural areas) this proved even more difficult. Very few participants were recruited for this phase of the course and, instead, an extension was offered to the first cohort of teachers. Most accepted the offer, although participation was lower overall.

2. Working within the CoP

The CoP using Slack was a useful forum for exchanging ideas on content and platforms (particularly WhatsApp), and getting answers to questions. Regular mentoring sessions suggested areas to check or develop, such as diagnostic testing and evaluation. Being able to talk through issues such as variable participation and connectivity was very valuable.

For inlingua trainers, our CoP platform was WhatsApp, allowing us to share ideas, tips, issues, highlights and resources. Teamwork was more immediate and vibrant than it would have been by email because responses were shorter and much quicker. An additional benefit was that this trainer group helped us improve our WhatsApp skills such as keeping to threads by using 'reply' to particular messages. We were also able to try out some of the tasks within our own group. Working with a completely new context – albeit remotely – was refreshing and rewarding for all. 'Grateful to be able to help and offer something' and 'It worked better than I thought' were two comments we all agreed with.

3. Working with course participants (CPs)

Of the 75 names in the first cohort, about 50 took part in the course. 43 of these teachers were actively involved for the majority of the course. The most consistent participation was from those who evidently had better access to Wi-Fi or other data. These were also the same CPs who had completed the online test and were aware of the course aims and expectations. They had taken time to express their needs and wishes, and were therefore more invested in the course.

On the other hand, few of those who were signed up as a forwarded name and phone number participated actively. It felt as if they had not 'bought into' the course. For some CPs, this was due to being unable to connect (for example, they were away teaching in rural villages), but for others, the reasons for their lack of participation were difficult to identify. Occasionally, CPs reappeared in a group to explain their absence. The course trainers responded with flexibility, and encouraged participation throughout.

4. Designing/delivering the course

While other platforms would still be preferred for online courses, these tend to assume access to a computer and free Wi-Fi. For a phone-based course with a high degree of personal contact, WhatsApp's main strength is recording speaking and recording oral feedback.

Short tasks with clear answers (such as common similes and proverbs) were easy to submit and were popular. However, they did not generate as much thinking and language as was hoped for learners at B1+. Longer, more demanding tasks (such as writing and reading) were often avoided by the CPs.

5. Course outcomes

a. Language outcomes

CP feedback highlighted a few areas of improvement such as grammar and pronunciation. Both the trainers and CPs felt that the detailed individual feedback they had recorded had a significant effect on pronunciation. Many of the CPs had almost never met proficient speakers or received correction on some of their pronunciation and grammar errors (vowel sounds, word stress, -ed endings, use or non-use of articles and inconsistent pluralisation). Trainers and CPs felt that they noticed a marked improvement in these errors over the course, having raised awareness of them for perhaps the first time.

WhatsApp showed that many CPs also recorded themselves several times and then deleted the recording to try again, suggesting that they were working hard to eliminate errors that had been highlighted previously.

When CPs sent in their easily-made recordings of stories, descriptions or opinions, trainers listened to them in a way that is never possible in a face-to-face situation (i.e. taking notes and re-listening). They then gave feedback on all of these issues, modelling and explaining correct pronunciation and grammar. Thanks to WhatsApp's simple record facility, this proved to be extremely quick to do. This depth of feedback is rare in a face-to-face or classroom setting.

CPs' written English was not as strong as their spoken English, and participants struggled with spelling, punctuation and capitalisation. It is hard to know the extent to which this was due to their own English level, or different keyboard technology (different keyboards with or without predictive text and auto spelling correction, probably Portuguese by default). WhatsApp encourages short messages and comments, but longer writing was avoided and few chose the option of writing on paper.

There were no specific reading tasks in the course. According to some of the CPs, GB does not have a book reading culture and many of them do not read for pleasure. This may also account for CPs' difficulty understanding written instructions – which were sometimes misinterpreted. Small screen reading skills should be an area of focus for any similar courses delivered in this context in future.

The area of classroom language for teachers and students was well received: 'I used to have difficulties starting my classes with things that call attention of the students, but now I have learnt several simple ways to do that,' and 'I can remember a lot of things such as getting the class started, classroom management, classroom languages, teacher languages, student languages, giving feedback to students and explaining how to do things.'

b. Teaching outcomes

For the CPs there was considerable interest in exploring methodology, although this was not the primary aim of the project. However, where possible, tasks from the face-to-face classroom were adapted to the WhatsApp groups to model communicative language learning activities.

One of the goals of the project was to model a class or community with each group of 15 CPs interacting with each other in the group chat. However, in spite of different efforts taken by trainers, all felt this interactivity was not achieved. CPs responded to trainer posts, but very few responded to each other, and little discussion was generated. This resulted in more teacher-centred interaction. One of the possible disadvantages of trainers providing individual feedback to CPs might have been a perception among the wider group that trainers did not respond to group posts. Participants may also have felt vulnerable texting in English to a group of colleagues they perceived to have a higher language level than their own.

On the other hand, many CPs tried out the tasks in their classes and were keen to share their learning. A few even posted videos of themselves doing so. Although there was some evidence of attachment to the teacher tightly controlling student language, many CPs embraced and adapted the task ideas into classroom activities.

Learning Point: WhatsApp seems to work well with large groups as a forum for discussing ideas, but as a language learning classroom, a large group does not produce interaction.

c. ELTA-GB outcomes

Feedback showed that CPs had learnt how they themselves could use WhatsApp to teach online, if they ever had to, and during the course CPs shared many ideas for how teachers could continue to develop and study online.

An ELTA-GB conference using WhatsApp was arranged soon after the course finished. Daily presentations were well attended and participation was active, showing that teachers want to develop. Two inlingua trainers led sessions at the conference.

Key learning points

This project has shown that even in a context like GB – where internet accessibility is still very limited – a remote language course for teachers is possible thanks to tools like WhatsApp, and can be of great benefit. As developments in the technological and communications infrastructure in Guinea Bissau allow for greater online interaction, both teachers and students will inevitably find themselves in much closer contact with English. Students will find English increasingly relevant and teachers who have developed digital literacy skills will be better equipped to pass these on.

A summary of the key learning points of the inlingua-ELTA-GB PRELIM project:

- For teacher development in ELTA-GB, the large group conference on WhatsApp generated a lot of ideas, enthusiasm and sharing. Comments are short and correction is not the aim. Contact with teachers around the world is possible.
- For language learning, the dynamics are different and communication tends to be direct to and from the teacher. This can be extremely effective, especially using WhatsApp's record function, but it is less sustainable as it requires considerable individual contact and does not work as effectively with a large group.
- Error correction posted in a large group could be seen as public reprimand and may hinder participation. As a result, very small groups of three might be more successful in generating trust and interaction.
- Phone keyboard skill should be explored as an emerging writing sub-skill. Work needs to be done on how to teach it.
- Small screen reading skills are increasingly relevant in cultures where there are now more phones than books. More thinking needs to be done on how to develop and assess this sub-skill.
- Clear expectations and guidelines need to be communicated to and accepted by CPs when they sign up to a course.

Zambia

Project background

1. Description of the partners

This project involved the collaboration of the Language Teachers Association of Zambia (LATAZ) and Celtic English Academy Cardiff (CEA) in the UK. CEA is a private language school and has been offering English language tuition for over 16 years. CEA designed and delivered the course to members of LATAZ, which has approximately 160 members who are teachers in Zambia primary and secondary schools.

2. Key features of the context

The participants on the course were practising teachers from Zambia who taught at both primary and secondary level (approx. 50:50 split). The majority of the participants either taught English as their main subject or as one of their main subjects. Those who taught another subject used English as the language of instruction. Although 156 teachers initially signed up to take part in the course, the number of participants who took part in synchronous live lessons was 57 in total (just over one-third). Most of these attended on a regular basis; however, there were some participants who attended on a more ad-hoc basis, giving a weekly average of around 45 attendees.

There was a good balance of male and female students with approximately 55 per cent being female and 45 per cent being male. Initially, approximately 50 per cent of the participants who signed up for the course came from rural locations. However, the number of participants who actually took part from rural locations was lower at around 20 per cent. This was mainly due to poor connectivity in more rural areas.

3. Outline of the course and rationale

From the outset, the course was designed to improve the participants' confidence in using English daily and an English-medium instruction (EMI) approach was adopted. Conversations with LATAZ also highlighted that writing was an area which the participants could benefit from, with a focus on as this was an area the pupils of the course participants struggled with. Participants were also invited to directly influence the course content with an aspect of a negotiated syllabus being woven in. A weekly breakdown can be seen in Appendix 1.

Learning points

- Through the EMI approach and writing tasks, participants were able to see a direct link between the course content and their own teaching context, making the course relevant to their context and needs
- The negotiated approach motivated the participants by giving them direct influence in the course content and led to participant engagement in lessons

Project findings

1. Working in partnership

Establishing a good relationship between the two partners is important when delivering this kind of project. Prior to the course commencing, CEA met with LATAZ on three occasions to establish the basic needs of the group, mode of delivery and communication, timetabling and course content.

Learning points

- Information provided by LATAZ was insightful and helped with planning many aspects of the course, including course content, mode of delivery, class groupings
- LATAZ was able to promote the course effectively and take care of initial course administration and communication

2. Working with the CPs

Contact with the CPs can be broken down into five main areas.

Initial contact	Welcome session	Live lessons	Ongoing support and course administration	Farewell session
Initial contact was made with the course participants by the ETA setting up a WhatsApp group	A live Zoom session at the start of the course to outline the course to the participants	These were the main touchpoint between CEA and the course participants. These sessions took place for one hour twice a week.	Regular use was made of the WhatsApp group for general course administration, group communication	At the end of a course, a onehour farewell session was held comprising a quiz and discussion as well as an opportunity for feedback

Learning points

- While email was useful as a backup, WhatsApp was the most effective method of communication
- WhatsApp provided participants with an informal means to provide feedback
- WhatsApp also meant that a CEA staff member could provide technical support if needed and it was important to have someone available for this role
- It facilitated discussion between participants, and participants became more autonomous
- The welcome session proved vital to allow participants to understand the course aims, manage expectations and to assess spoken English

3. Course design and delivery

3.1 Diagnostics

To assess the participants level of English, a Google Form was distributed which contained:

- Multiple-choice and cloze grammar questions
- Two freer writing tasks

The second writing task also asked participants about their expectations for the course. Although most of the participants simply wanted the opportunity to practise their English, a few requested more of a focus on methodology despite not being an explicit course aim. It also reinforced our assumption that the participants' level of English would be high due to Zambia once being a former British colony. Most participants were at B2 level or above.

Learning points

- Asking participants to write about their expectations meant that expectations were managed by highlighting the parameters of the course in the welcome sessions and first live session
- The teachers from CEA who taught on the course also found the opportunity to review the diagnostic tests useful to help prepare them for the course
- A diagnostic test helped guide course content. For example, participants used a lot of idioms and had a rather formal and descriptive way of expressing themselves; this helped guide the course content towards encouraging the participants to use more natural English
- The diagnostic test also gave us an insight into their lifestyle and experiences, revealing that they were interested in learning more about Wales, which again helped to guide the course content, and this was woven into the course design

3.2 Course design

Although the course outline was created before the course started, lessons were generally planned two weeks in advance, meaning that emerging needs could be catered for and adaptations made such as the lessons on World Englishes and Food. Lesson materials were created by the course coordinator at CEA and two of the teachers on the course.

Learning points

- Not planning too far in advance meant that adaptations could be made to meet shifting needs and in interests
- Involving teaching in the course design fostered a sense of collaboration within CEA itself and gave the teachers on the course ownership of the lesson materials

3.3 Initial teacher training

An initial training session was held to prepare the teachers from CEA for the project. Teachers were given:

- An overview of the diagnostic tests
- An outline of the draft course outline
- A walkthrough the first lesson materials and the welcome lesson
- An insight into Zambian culture delivered by one member of the teaching team who had previously undertaken voluntary work in Zambia on several occasions

Learning points

- Providing some initial training helped prepare teachers for a context which they were not used to and had some reservations about

3.4 Course delivery

Mode of delivery

The course was delivered mainly synchronously using Zoom with additional asynchronous input.

Synchronous Input	Asynchronous Input
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two x one-hour live sessions per week • Different groups were created to keep classes smaller and afford participants plenty of opportunities to engage with each other and the teacher • Initially the participants were split into 12 groups but because not as many participants joined the course as anticipated, the groups were reduced to six or eight, depending on the week 	<p>An online portal was set up using Edublogs which contained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies of all the lesson material • Additional activities, quizzes, videos, and content to provide extension activities. The portal served several purposes.

Learning points

- Small class sizes helped facilitate classroom interaction and participants to actively engage
- Asynchronous input allowed absent students to catch up
- Asynchronous input also gave participants autonomy, as they could get as much, or as little as they wanted to out of the course

Challenges of course delivery

The interactive sessions were not without challenges. However, the challenges were addressed during the course and overcome as much as possible within the constraints of the project.

i. Attendance and internet connectivity

Attendance could sometimes be erratic due to several factors including:

- Poor internet connectivity
- Participants being able to find time to take part in the course and to juggle this with other commitments in their lives such as marking national exams

To overcome these problems, we:

- Offered classes on different days at different times with greater flexibility introduced into the groupings and the opportunity to change groups from week to week
- In week four, a short one-hour catch up session on a Friday afternoon was introduced for those participants who had been unable to join earlier in the week. These were welcomed by participants and would usually attract between five and ten participants per week.

Making use of an online portal so that participants could work asynchronously also helped to counter some of the problems of absence, as the participants were able to log into the portal, access the lesson materials and complete tasks in their own time. Over the course of the project, approximately 50 participants made use of the portal and three participants took part in the course solely by making use of the portal and by submitting weekly written tasks as they were unable to access Zoom successfully.

Further asynchronous opportunities were provided with the weekly writing tasks. Each week around 20 pieces of work were submitted, which were then corrected and returned to the participants with feedback.

Those that were able to attend did so regularly, which helped develop a positive relationship between the teacher and the participants. At the end of the course, one of the teachers reported that:

Many of the same students came to class each week so we were able to build a good rapport and it was nice to see them get to know each other as well. It really was a great experience!

ii. Reluctance to participate or to engage in meaningful discussion.

One of our teachers reported that:

What became apparent was that despite having a high level of English, the students were reluctant to engage in open class discussions.

Another teacher reported that some discussion activities intended to take the format of a discussion became a series of extended monologues instead.

These issues were overcome by ensuring the lessons were planned with the use of breakout rooms (in which participants felt more comfortable expressing their opinions and input on turn-taking and active listening in lesson design).

During the course, the participants' confidence grew; as the course went on it became clear that the participants were eager to participate during the lessons.

By the end of course, the teacher that had reported that her participants were reluctant to speak at the start commented that:

The best thing by far was meeting this wonderful group of people and their generosity in sharing their thoughts and opinions on all and every topic. Finding out about life in Zambia and the challenges they face was also an important lesson for me. The students were interesting, interested, motivated and full of opinions, which made it a real pleasure to teach.

4. Course outcomes

Confidence using English

The main aim of this course was to improve the learners' confidence in using English. Each lesson had several segments embedded into it, which afforded learners the opportunity to practise their speaking skills and develop their confidence and, in this respect, the course achieved this. Improvements were also seen in their writing, as they started to write more naturally.

The course also helped the participants improve their range of grammar and vocabulary. At the end of the course student feedback questionnaires returned comments such as"

My vocabulary has also been enriched by the course.

The course taught me how to use cause and effect.

I was able to practise the use of present modals like should, can, might, must, etc.

I must say I have learnt a lot of new words and how to use past, present, perfect and continuous tenses.

The project also delivered some unintended outcomes, which were of benefit to both partners.

The cultural exchange perspective

The participants responded very well to the cultural aspects of the lessons and loved learning more about the UK in general and Wales/Cardiff more specifically. One teacher reported that:

Sometimes wondered what the students were getting out of the course as their English was so good and it felt inappropriate to correct them based on British English norms. In the end this felt like more of a cultural exchange than a language programme.

The motivational effect of teaching on the course

One teacher commented:

Knowing that many students lived in very rural areas with little infrastructure but were making every effort to fit in the sessions around family life and work, really made me recognise how much they appreciated the opportunity to attend the course. This spurred me on to make sure it was worth their while.

Participant networking

After consultation with LATAZ, participants had been grouped so that each group had participants from different parts of Zambia in it and the students forged new relationships with their classmates. This also came through on the WhatsApp group, which in a way developed into its own community of practice. Participants used the group at times to exchange thoughts and ideas about subjects unrelated to the PRELIM project and to sometimes ask others for advice on completely unrelated matters. Even though the project has now finished, the group has continued.

Teaching methodology

Even though the course was not a methodology course, in the final session, several participants remarked that they felt they had gained a few teaching ideas during the course which they would like to implement during their lessons, specifically activities used during the course to encourage participants to speak, the use of sentence stems and starters, elicitation and the use of images and visuals.

Overall, the participants reported that the course had been a worthwhile experience for them and returned comments in the farewell session which included:

There wasn't a lesson we had that we didn't end up laughing.

I enjoyed learning about Wales and really appreciated being able to apply this to Zambia – I felt Zambia was appreciated.

I must say, it has been the best time of my educational life, as learning was more interesting than ever.

Key learning points

- Designing a course which was relevant to the participants needs and context meant that they were engaged and motivated to take part
- A good relationship between the two partners facilitated effective communication with the CPs and provided essential information related to course content and delivery
- Diagnostic testing was important not only to gauge level, but also to help manage expectations
- Establishing a preferred method of communication (WhatsApp) as well as a back-up (email) kept communication channels working
- Small class sizes were important to encourage interaction and for participants to actively engage
- Asynchronous content gave participants autonomy and provided a catch-up mechanism for absent participants
- Flexibility needs to be shown in terms of course content and delivery with the need to adapt
- The course went beyond simply being an English course and promoted networking opportunities and cultural exchange

Appendix 1: Course outline

Week Number	School Subject Focus	Topic	Writing Task
1	History	South Wales: The Past and Present	A comparison composition
2	Geography and the Natural World	Impact of humans on the natural world	Creative writing: Writing with empathy
3	English Language	World Englishes and Customs from around the World	An informal article giving advice
4	Sport	Sporting figures	A biography
5	English Literature	A traditional Welsh short story	Creative writing: A short story
6	Geography/Statistic	The town and country	Interpreting statistical information
7	Science and Technology	Renewable energy	A discursive essay
8	N/A	Food and Drink	A review
9	N/A	The education system	A reflection on what they had learned during the course.
10	N/A	Happiness	N/A

Georgia

Project background

Description of the partners

The PRELIM project paired The English Teachers Association of Georgia (ETAG) with Languages United to design and deliver a remote language improvement course.

ETAG is a not-for-profit teachers' association, established in 1995, with 350 members. It has eight branches across the country and runs a variety of courses for its members. As well as providing benefits to members, it also aims for non-members to benefit from its work. It is an associate of IATEFL and TESOL.

Website: www.etag.ge/

Languages United is an independent language school based in Bath, UK. It provides English courses for adults and juniors, both at its school and online. Before starting PRELIM, Languages United had worked with other teachers' associations to deliver professional development training.

Website: <https://www.languagesunited.com>

Key features of the context

The course was to be focused on a small cohort of English teachers (20) with language levels of A2–B1, living in a rural area of the country. An area of Western Georgia, Imereti, was identified where a local coordinator could help with identifying potential participants.

Outline of the course and rationale

The main objectives of the project were to:

1. Improve the speaking and writing English language proficiency of teachers with low proficiency level
2. Improve teacher confidence and willingness to participate in future professional development

This team included representatives from Languages United, ETAG and, importantly, a teacher representative.

Learning point: The inclusion of a teacher representative, who had been in a similar position to the intended CPs, proved to be key to the project's success.

To avoid potential participants being discouraged from applying, one-to-one interviews were conducted in their L1 by ETAG. The interview and a questionnaire in L1 established the applicants' availability to participate, the technology available to them and aspects of the classes they taught at school. The applicants themselves were asked to identify their skills that they felt needed to be improved, and the ETAG interviewers estimated their English language level.

Learning point: For courses aimed at CPs with low English levels and low confidence, initial communication in L1 avoids barriers to participation.

A participant agreement was signed by each participant to confirm their commitment to the course and their consent/data privacy agreement.

Learning point: Early indication of the commitment required from students and their agreement to this reduces the drop-out rate.

Course Participants	
Gender	19 Female 1 Male
English Level	A2–B1
Average years of experience teaching English	8
Level of English being taught	Primary/Middle school
Participation in previous ETAG training	3

Course duration	10 weeks (January to March 2021)
Lesson hours	3 hours per week (2 sessions of 1.5 hours)
Self-study	2 hours per week
Mentoring	15 minutes per student per week (50 per cent spoken/synchronous, 50 per cent written/asynchronous)
Weekly Q&A	Facebook live session with teachers
Social programme	Monthly social event

Languages United proposed an intensive course with high contact levels to achieve the objectives in this context. CPs were consulted in their L1 with the help of the project's teacher representative and the following course was agreed:

CPs formed a single class, with two teachers sharing the delivery of lessons.

A topic-based syllabus was created, using topics that CPs would be likely to use in their own classroom.

The lesson incorporated an introduction by one teacher and breakout rooms supervised by the two teachers. Each lesson contained an element of presentation by the students, as well as integrated reflection tasks.

Different types of reflections included:

- Reflection on the language of instruction used
- Reflection on how the materials used in the lessons can be modified to students' own scenarios
- Reflection on a student's personal goals, objectives, confidence, skills and next-step strategies
- Reflection/feedback on the course

Students were expected to undertake a minimum of two hours' self-study per week. Activity was guided by the teacher and included completion and submission of homework tasks, preparation tasks ahead of synchronous lesson input (Flipped Classroom model), engagement with the VLE platform, maintaining a portfolio of course handouts and materials that could be used in each CP's teaching context, and the completion of guided reflection activities.

structure gave flexibility to adjust to CPs' needs.

Project findings

Working in partnership

ETAG's input into the organisation, participant selection and course planning was critical to the success of the project. The appointment of an ETAG member to be the participant representative and coordinator was especially important for communication with the participants in L1 and motivating participants.

It was felt by both parties that the project team worked well to deliver the project together.

'ETAG has gained a valuable partner. I believe that this collaboration will continue (fingers crossed for this).'
Manana Ruseishvili, President, ETAG

'We thoroughly enjoyed working with all the partners and have learnt so much from all parties everyone involved. ETAG has shown a real professionalism and enthusiasm for collaborative work. We will be looking for ways to further our collaboration and extend our partnership.' Slavenka Vukovic-Bryan, Managing Director, Languages United

Working within the CoP

The appointment of NILE to oversee the delivery of projects proved to be a great success. The community of practice that was set up for communication between projects enabled the sharing of ideas and discussion of common issues. Their guidance helped make the project a success.

Working with the CPs

Working with a small group enabled a personalised approach that responded to the group's learning needs, built rapport and resulted in high attendance.

Of the 20 initial CPs, one dropped out at the start of the course due to personal circumstances, with the other 19 continuing to complete the course.

The mentoring of students allowed teachers to respond to individual CP's questions/needs/circumstances/concerns, and this was especially important for building confidence.

Designing/delivering the course

At least six of the CPs told us directly that they had never spoken to native English speakers before the course.

This last point informed our classroom management approach with the group. While teaching online it is generally more desirable (for trainers) to have CPs' cameras switched on, to facilitate communication and interaction. However, on this issue we took a more gentle approach with our expectations. We encouraged CPs to keep their cameras switched on at least for the duration of the synchronous input. The rapport and insight we gained through one-to-one mentoring enabled us to be sensitive to CPs struggling to juggle poor internet connection, a house full of three generations of family members and even the reality of frequent power outages that plunged the house into darkness.

Finding that CPs' circumstances differed widely, in terms of access to the Internet, access to a computer or phone, access to a quiet working space, the teachers were able to identify barriers to learning and experiment with approaches to mitigate these. For example, presentation slides were provided in advance for lower-level participants.

This personalised approach was appreciated by the CPs:

Thanks especially which I think you understood me well.

Learning point: Classroom management and course delivery must be flexible to the CPs' learning environment.

To facilitate CPs attending classes, it was originally decided to use the same platform as they were using for their own teaching, Microsoft Teams.

The technology used during the course was changed to provide flexibility for different levels of connectivity and digital literacy, which might not have been possible with a larger cohort. As CPs' circumstances changed during the course, e.g. returning to F2F teaching and no longer having a laptop to work on at home, the teachers adapted the delivery to allow for audio-only attendance.

As the teachers developed a better understanding of the CPs' teaching context, through mentoring, it became apparent that some of the looped input being provided was less relevant. For example, it was assumed that teaching contexts included class sizes that allowed for pair work and group work. This was not the case for many CPs, who had class sizes of just two to five students. The initial course design incorporated lots of dynamic communicative language teaching techniques that CPs could recycle but this was changed to ensure that resources and activities did not rely on group work.

Learning point: A more thorough understanding of the CPs' teaching contexts is required to ensure experiential learning activities are relevant.

The delivery platform was moved from Microsoft Teams to Zoom due to a number of factors. There were issues with CP familiarity with Zoom on some devices.

Learning point: An assumption was made that CPs would have received L1 instruction in how to use the platform and be using it in a similar way to Languages United teachers. This was found not to be the case, with many CPs not being familiar with the platform's features, and using it for asynchronous delivery only.

Learning point: Inclusion of more learner training on how to use the videoconferencing platform on a phone as a student.

Facebook was the only digital platform that all 19 CPs were confidently familiar with. For CPs without access to a computer, Facebook Messenger acted as the sole means of communication between the teachers and CPs for reminder messages, shared Zoom links, shared PowerPoint presentations, assignment submissions and one-to-one video calls.

Learning point: Use of the mobile messaging technology most used by CPs, instead of an LMS, would have facilitated communication.

The overwhelming majority of cultural awareness-raising activities – in both directions – was facilitated through Facebook. The closed group was the non-academic content forum for sharing, predominantly YouTube links and photos. Weekly Facebook Live sessions and the monthly social events were well received and covered diverse topics such as: a British scone bake-along; a Q&A with a mainstream secondary school teacher specialising in Special Educational Needs; social chit-chat ranging from Megxit and the Oprah interview to Coronavirus vaccination rates, and why British people are obsessed with talking about the weather.

Pedagogically, Facebook was included in the course delivery to create an affective English language environment and we saw contributions grow from single thumbs-up emojis to extended pieces of text.

Course outcomes

(i) Learner outcomes

In the end-of-course feedback, all participants replied that the course had addressed the skills that they needed to improve, that their confidence had improved and that they would like to continue professional development. They also all agreed strongly that “the lessons will help me when I teach my students”.

Reflection and application to their teaching

The CPs started to put into practice what they had learnt on the course:

Also, as you advised me, I try to speak more English during the lesson, I give students instructions in English, I advise them to try to ask their questions in English and if they can't, I help them to translate their questions.

I improved the pronunciation of the words and used these words with my students as well.

For me and my students, the lesson process become more fun, more effective and, most importantly, the students' speaking skills developed remarkably quickly.

You are definitely the best team that gives us so much useful information to run our pedagogical work more effectively and, most importantly, you are sharing the British teaching model methods directly in the learning process.

I had problems with my student when they had testing they didn't use to write small simple essay. They used to leave this place empty. With the help of this course they began to write step by step, now I know how to simplify task for them.

Attitude towards training and professional development

There was a change in attitude among the participants towards training, and an appreciation of the benefit of professional development:

Now I, as an English teacher, certainly know what I need to learn from other teachers.

The feedback from the assignments was encouraging and not humiliating. I like how you always said what you liked about the work.

These three months for me were a step forward in my life ... which I would gladly repeat many more times.

This is the first course I have done since I qualified to be a teacher, seven years ago ... I am really happy about that course. It was amazing three months. I'm very proud of it.

Cultural exchange

One CP has shared photos from the English Day she held with her class and another has spoken to her Director and colleagues and students and they are planning an English Day next month. They want to invite students from other schools to share the day, they want to decorate in red, white and blue and maybe put on a performance in English.

ETAG commented:

My expectations were that this would be a normal language development course, just like other ones ETAG has had with other partners before, but this training exceeded my expectations and offered a unique way of training. Language development elements were very skillfully combined with British cultural studies. This made teachers very motivated and enthusiastic. In the end of the training what I saw was completely open and confident teachers eager to speak and get involved in the discussions, etc.

and

One unusual thing that attracted me to the project was that it included teachers of English with lower competence in English. Another thing that proved fascinating when the course unfolded was the unique combination of classes and social/cultural evenings. As I mentioned at the goodbye (and not farewell meeting), it was fascinating to watch the teachers open up and become more confident.

Collaboration between course participants

Unexpected feedback given in the one-to-one mentoring sessions included the appetite for group work among CPs, outside of the synchronous lesson time.

An activity that was set up to demonstrate flipped classroom methodology yielded an enthusiasm among CPs to share ideas, collaborate, coach, peer correct and support each other – and the group presentation activity was repeated in the final week at the CPs' request.

Anecdotally, we were told that CPs used Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp to facilitate these connections, and this is one of the takeaways that the CPs leave the course with.

(i) Teaching outcomes

Languages United's teachers gained an understanding of the CPs' context and gained experience in adapting to these different contexts. This included adapting delivery and technologies used as the course progressed and adapting to cultural factors, e.g. topics within the planned syllabus:

Our topic-based course design included topics that we believed would be useful to the CPs in their own teaching contexts. Of the ten topics we chose, two were unsuccessful in terms of meaningful connection with the CPs. The topics were travel and the environment. They were chosen based on our assumptions of what the CPs would cover. The misunderstanding was identified by the trainers based on CPs' responses in the synchronous lessons and within the 1:1 mentoring sessions.

The misunderstanding regarding the appropriacy of travel as a topic served to educate the trainers on the socio-economic background of the CPs. The mismatch between the UK's perspective on the environment and that of the CPs' perspective educated the trainers regarding how the topic can and perhaps should be presented in different contexts. The UK trainers needed to reflect on their own critical pedagogy by uncovering these assumptions and presenting the activities in a more global context, rather than from a UK perspective.
Jayne Bowra, Senior Teacher

(ii) ETAG outcomes

ETAG commented:

... our organisation has gained a valuable team of trained teachers in one of the regions of Georgia. This makes a good basis for attracting more teachers to ETAG from that region and the possibility to implement other projects in that region, as the experience of managing a project is there already. Rusiko Tkemaladze, Director, ETAG

and

ETAG's image has been further promoted. Manana Ruseishvili, President, ETAG

Summary of learning points

The project successfully achieved its objective of improving the language skills of teachers of English, as well as improving their confidence and willingness to participate in CPD activities. The delivery of the course online was a learning experience for both the trainers and the participants, with expectations of what was possible being exceeded.

The main learning points are summarised below:

- The inclusion of a teacher representative, who had been in a similar position to the intended CPs, proved to be key to the project's success
- For courses aimed at CPs with low English levels and low confidence, initial communication in L1 avoids barriers to participation
- Early indication of the commitment required from students and their agreement to this reduces the drop-out rate
- The theme-based course structure gave flexibility to adjust to CPs' needs
- Classroom management and course delivery must be flexible to the CPs' learning environment
- A more thorough understanding of the CPs' teaching contexts is required to ensure experiential learning activities are relevant
- An assumption was made that CPs would have received L1 instruction in how to use the platform and be using it in a similar way to Languages United teachers. This was found not to be the case, with many CPs not being familiar with the platform's features, and using it for asynchronous delivery only.
- Inclusion of more learner training on how to use the videoconferencing platform on a phone as a student
- Use of the mobile messaging technology most used by CPs, instead of an LMS, would have facilitated communication

Both Languages United and ETAG would like to continue working together on further projects. ETAG commented that *'Together with sponsors we could plan similar courses for other regions of Georgia or design new courses.'*

Serbia

Project background

1. Description of the partners

ELTA Serbia

ELTA Serbia is the Association of Teachers of English in Serbia, affiliated with IATEFL. They are a very active group, running annual conferences, seminars and a programme of webinars, among other activities.

The main contacts for this project were Ivana Milosevic, President of ELTA Serbia and Jelena Spasić, the ELTA Serbia International Coordinator.

Bell Educational Services Ltd

Bell is a language education and teacher training provider based in Cambridge. Bell's Education Programmes department (through whom this project was delivered) also provide educational consultancy services and work with partners around the world to offer teacher training and English language tuition.

The main contacts for this project were Kristina Smith (Trainer and Course Developer) and Tom Beakes (Academic Manager for Bell's Education Programmes). Kristina acted as the main project coordinator for the project.

2. Key features of the context

Serbian teachers of English all have a high level of language proficiency: C1 and higher. During meetings with the ELTA board, it was felt that a course covering how English has changed in the 21st century plus trends in British culture that are affecting the English language would be the most useful for Serbian teachers. We were told that there are many professional development opportunities available for teachers in Serbia, so there would be a lot of competition – from MOOCs, courses run by the American embassy, etc. for teachers' attention. Also, our course would not be accredited by the Ministry of Education in Serbia and so be less attractive to teachers as a result.

An important factor was that the UK and Serbia have different Christmas holiday dates, and this, coupled with the dates of the school winter break, made it harder to reach as many teachers as we wanted.

Learning point: The calendar for holidays in a country where PRELIM is planned should be considered and the timescale adjusted if necessary.

Although a small country, there are differences between rural and urban environments in terms of having Internet access or teachers checking email. It proved difficult to attract many teachers from outside the main cities.

Learning points:

- Prior to accepting ELTAs on projects like this, check for requirements for accreditation or Ministry of Education approval in the country as such courses need to meet specific requirements. Such courses may have to be written well in advance to fit the Ministry timetable.

3. Outline of the course and rationale (as in the project outline)

Course objective (as agreed with ETA): to support Serbian teachers of English with a language level of around C1 to *have more confidence in identifying and explaining how English is changing in the 21st century and how changes in British culture are affecting the language.*

The course consisted of:

- Five weeks of self-study materials with a one-week break after week three
- Approx. 25 hours of study inc. self-study tasks and webinars
- Three self-study topics in each week, time allocated was 60 minutes per topic, with a choice of three from four topics in week four
- Reflection and discussion topics in a closed Facebook group, 30 minutes allocated per week
- Six live webinars on Zoom

The self-study materials were made available on a Google Site.

Some examples of the materials can be seen here: <https://sites.google.com/view/exampleprelimserbia2021/home>

Course schedule and topics

PRELIM Serbia 2021 – Contemporary English language and British culture

February 04 – Webinar 1: Introduction to contemporary English and British culture
February 04–10: Week 1

- The origins of new lexis
- Identity in the UK
- Mining a text

February 11 – Webinar 2: British cultural icons
February 11–17: Week 2

- Vocabulary focus: A word for all seasons
- Me and my box – a YouTube thing
- Txtng: lv it or h8 it

February 18 – Webinar 3: RIP, RP: Pronunciation change and the sound of future English
February 18–24: Week 3

- English 100 years from now
- Native speakerism and teaching ELF
- Hedging and softening your language

Break from February 25–March 03

March 04 – Webinar 4: Grammar: recent and ongoing changes

March 04–10: Week 4 (Choose 3 out of 4 lessons)

- Language, gender and political correctness
- Gender stereotyping in Advertising
- Black Lives Matter Movement and its impact on language
- The new life of ‘they’

March 11 – Webinar 5: What makes the British laugh?
March 11–17: Week 5

- The truth about raining cats and dogs!
- Is there a national sense of humour?
- The growth of e-sports

March 18 – Webinar 6: Zoom Games, feedback and further steps

Participation summary

- 94 teachers initially registered
- We estimate around 60 teachers were active at some point during the course
- ELTA Serbia monitored webinar attendance and online participation – and ultimately 51 teachers were awarded ‘course completion’ certificates based on their webinar attendance and task contributions
- Approximately 90 per cent of participants were female, ten per cent male

Project findings

1. Working in partnership

- Initially we had weekly meetings with ELTA Serbia. These dropped off and we relied on email with a few meetings with ELTA board members after the course started.
- **Learning points:**
Forming a working party from ELTA members and allocating specific responsibilities would be of benefit on another course. Also, a small number of course participants could be selected or there could be a call for volunteers to join the meetings. That would have provided us with another channel for feedback.

2. Working within the CoP

- We followed the Slack communications and attended most of the catch-up meetings, which were a useful way of sharing ideas and crowd-sourcing solutions to problems
- Through the CoP, Kristina was able to directly contact a colleague from another organisation with experience of working in the Balkans to check some cultural points and ask questions about the local context
- **Learning points:**
Slack seemed a user-friendly and efficient way to communicate together on a variety of topics. Use of a similar platform should be considered for future projects.

3. Working with the CPs

All pre-course and during-course communications with participants took place via ELTA. ELTA advertised the course during their annual conference in December. They contacted teachers around the country by email and co-wrote the pre-course questionnaire with the project coordinator. They set up the closed Facebook group and handed it over to Kristina to run/moderate. ELTA handled the registration and distributed feedback questionnaires.

Participating in professional development on social media (in the Facebook group) was a new skill for a number of CPs. In the beginning, only course tutors added content but as time went on CPs began sharing more and more content, including links to other resources related to contemporary English and British culture.

This Facebook space can become a valuable community of practice, especially if another cohort take the PRELIM course or if a programme of monthly webinars is set up.

The Facebook group was used to:

- Post announcements, e.g. next week's materials have gone live on the Google Site, webinar recordings have been posted, etc.
- Share the links to the Zoom webinars (a different link each week for security)
- Post questions for reflection related to the webinars and the self-study materials
- Share funny images or memes related to course content
- Share new posts from other sites (British Council, twitter, publisher websites, etc.) related to course content
- Share examples of course homework
- Share reactions from students when teachers brought our course materials to class
- Share news about the PRELIM project published online (e.g. this EL Gazette article)
- Give tips for updating Zoom and using some of its features
- Sharing documents or images that we would use during the Zoom classes

We tried to include some extra tools such as Padlet during the course but found there was not much enthusiasm for adding more ICT.

Some CPs found the self-study element of the course a bit unusual. They wanted to be able to show that they had done the work. The lack of a Learning Management System (LMS) made monitoring who had done what difficult and the Serbian teachers would have appreciated the added structure of an LMS.

Learning points:

- Key demographic information should be added to registration information (e.g. rural/urban, gender, age of students taught, etc.) which can inform course planning and impact analysis
 - Ways should be found to make more teachers aware of the course and enable us to reach a larger number of teachers
- Cultural learning expectations and preferences should be explicitly addressed as part of course orientation. For example, course participants were unused to discussing and reflecting on Facebook. A few days of orientation into this kind of learning should be planned for a future iteration. The exact purpose of the Facebook group could be made more explicit, sharing examples of how it can be used.
- A more explicit connection between the course topic and the design of the course (both using 21st century language and skills) could have been made

Facebook examples:

Figure 1: Early in the course a post from a CP was seen by almost everyone in the group but only the tutor responded.



Figure 2: request for cultural explanation garnered more comments (33 in total, 27 from CPs):

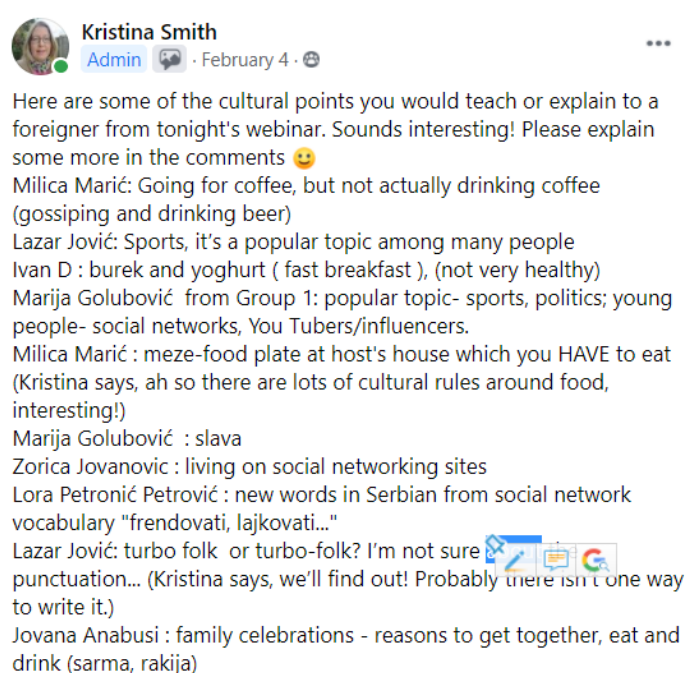


Figure 3: second part of post



 **Breakout rooms** 

In your groups

1. Discuss the idea of culture with a small 'c' in Serbia. If you were going to give a presentation about this to a group of foreigners, what groups would you include?
2. Make a list.
3. One person should be ready to copy the list to share later in the whole group chat.

 Tania Maslova and 6 others  33 Comments Seen by 51

 Like  Comment

View 4 more comments

 **Ivana Stojanovic** 

As for "brate", you can address whomever with it, no matter their age or sex. You can even call your dog or cat like that. So yes, literally anyone. (Now, you made me use "literally". 😊)

4. Course outcomes

For those that participated, the course was a highly positive experience. All respondents to our survey said they would recommend the course to a colleague:

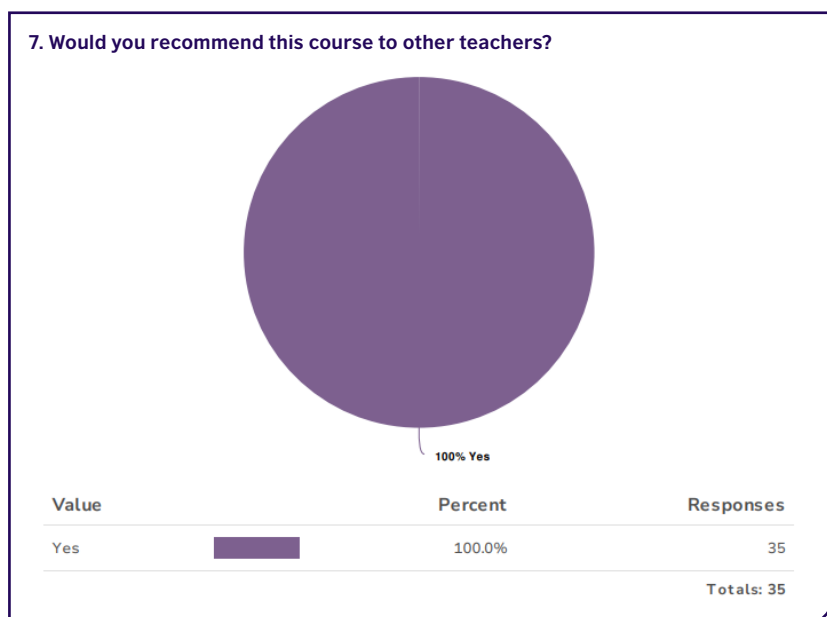


Figure 4: participant satisfaction

Survey data

As part of our mid- and end-of-course questionnaires we gave the participants a list of 'can do' statements based on course content which they scored out of 10 to represent their level of confidence (1 being 'not confident at all', 10 being 'very confident'). We gave the same statements in each questionnaire so any changes in confidence could be measured. Below are the results (based on 20 responses for the mid-course questionnaire and 35 for the end-of-course version). The first nine statements are coloured in blue, as these topics had already been covered at the time of the mid-course questionnaire and hence you would expect less change.

Can do statement	Midcourse average	End-ofcourse average	Change
1. I am more aware of new words coming into modern English	9.2	9.4	0.2
2. I can explain some cultural references, both established and recent that have been introduced into English	8.8	8.9	0.1
3. I can more effectively evaluate and use authentic English texts in my lessons	8.7	9	0.3
4. I can listen to and identify features of natural spoken discourse in the context of an 'unboxing' Youtube video	9.1	9.3	0.2
5. I am more aware of commonly used texting language in English and how it is used	8.8	9.2	0.4
6. I can explain what model of English I teach and why	9.5	8.9	-0.6
7. I am more aware of 'hedging and softening' language and can apply this	8.7	9.3	0.6
8. I am more aware of the features that make English comprehensible globally and can apply this knowledge to my own context.	9.1	9.3	0.2
9. I can recognise (and use where appropriate) examples of politically correct and incorrect language.	8.4	9.2	0.8
10. I can identify how English is used to promote stereotypes in advertising.	8.7	9.3	0.6
11. I can explain what the Black Lives Matter movement is and how it is influencing contemporary English.	8.3	9.2	0.9
12. I am aware of how the word 'they' is changing in use in modern spoken and written English when referring to gender.	8	9.7	1.7
13. I am aware of different types of idioms and can use a range of contemporary idioms in my own language.	8.3	9.2	0.9
14. I can recognise and understand humour when viewing/reading English and am aware of ways language is employed in British humour.	8.7	9.3	0.6
15. I am aware of e-sports and the language used to talk about them.	7.7	8.8	1.1

With such a small response set, it's hard to read too much into these results but they reflect two trends:

- 1) Baseline levels of confidence were already very high, reflecting the high level of English and professional standards required of ELTA Serbia members, and their already high levels of exposure to Anglophone culture via media and travel.
- 2) While baseline levels were already quite high, we can note an overall increase in confidence scores across almost all areas as a result of the course. These findings are backed up by the qualitative results (see below and Appendix A).

Qualitative data:

Here is a summary of commonly recurring themes from our open survey questions.

Teachers most valued learning about the following:

- New contemporary language/changes in the language
- Aspects of British culture and their relation to language
- Meeting and sharing with colleagues
- New materials and activities to use in the classroom

Typical comments included:

I enjoyed reading the FB discussions and all the sharing was also great! I appreciate the materials you created and am looking forward to using them.

This course made me think more about how rapidly the language is changing and how important it is to keep up with modern language.

Learning new words, lots of resources, breakout rooms (it's easier for me to talk in smaller groups), gaining self-confidence, "unboxing", listening native speakers in concept of education and so on ...

Having met all these amazing people and colleagues, I enjoyed every conversation with them, as well as their thoughts on the topics. What I certainly appreciate and I am thankful to is the encouragement to introduce and teach more about the contemporary culture during the lessons. In addition to that, I'm backed up with loads of activity examples and resources which could help my lessons be more interesting and help us grow fonder of English language.

It made me more confident to freely update textbooks and talk about contemporary, world English.

A full list of comments can be seen in Appendix A.

Organisational impact

For Bell, the nature of PRELIM meant our teaching and training staff had to think more deeply about, and become familiar with, many aspects of online learning which they weren't accustomed to. It provided valuable experience to our teaching and training staff, which we can utilise in future projects. It also highlighted some very obvious skills gaps with regard to educational technology use, which we hope to address in our future CPD activity!

Learning points:

- As teachers, the most valued course content gave them practical ideas for the classroom as well as expanding their knowledge and use of English. Building in methodology to language improvement courses for teachers should be part of the project scope from the outset.
- Data collection is critical for assessing impact and needs to be built into the course from the start in collaboration with the partner organisation.
- Ensuring these courses reach those teachers that would most benefit from them will increase their impact. There was a sense of 'preaching to the converted' with some of the course participants!

Appendix A – Qualitative data from end-of-course questionnaire

This is a collection of the open-text answers from our end-of-course survey to flesh out the summary provided in the main report.

What did you find most useful about the course?

Response
Practical explanations that the instructors gave from their own life.
Surely I've learned to pay more attention on the culture but also to connect it with other parts of language such as humor, current trends in society and the overall evolution of vocabulary and the novelties in it due to modern idioms and slang. I also figured out how to use new practical tech tools for my class, which is pretty easy and cool.
A lot of new techniques that I can employ in my teaching and of course wonderful teachers!
Recorded webinars that I could watch when the time suits me and replay them how many times I wanted. Also, all the handouts/additional material provided by the moderators/PRELIM team.
The materials shared
I enjoyed all of it and I think it will help me in the future. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to follow live webinars because of my timetable, but I enjoyed exploring all the materials.
We should appreciate the varieties of English.
The opportunity to interact with a lot of ELT, of varied teaching experiences and varied teaching contexts. I enjoyed sharing ideas and information.
Everything is useful on its own way.
The relevance of the material and the opportunity to hear the native speakers' feelings for their own language.
I enjoyed reading the FB discussions and all the sharing was also great! I appreciate the materials you created and am looking forward to using them.
The ready-made, but also adaptable materials, as well as the way how to explore the language in search of new lexis (the releases of Oxford Dictionaries, how and where to look for authentic reading materials, etc.).

The exposure to contemporary English language.
Some familiar activities used in different manner, with different goals (hangman, bingo...)
This course made me think more about how rapidly the language is changing and how important it is to keep up with modern language and expand our vocabulary in that sense.
There are many things that can influence my teaching in a positive way. The topics were interesting and what I liked the most is communicating with other teachers and sharing information, experience, materials ...
I have learnt about some changes in contemporary English
Learning new words, lots of resources, breakout rooms (it's easier for me to talk in smaller groups), gaining self-confidence, "unboxing", listening native speakers in concept of education and so on ...
How different teachers from different parts of the country have so similar, yet so distinct way of teaching.
In my case the course hasn't just helped me with my professional life but it has helped me regarding my everyday life as well considering that I have recently moved to the UK and I work and live here now. It has helped me to better understand and get immersed in the British culture in general.
The amount of new information and competence of educators.
Talking about Black Lives Matter.
All the topics were very useful and interesting.
All the topics were very useful.
Everything was very useful.
The changes in English grammar.
Well, all the aspects were really useful when combined like this.
Wonderful and interesting topics followed by interactive presentations.
Wonderful and interesting topics followed by interactive presentations.

Having met all these amazing people and colleagues, I enjoyed every conversation with them, as well as their thoughts on the topics. What I certainly appreciate and I am thankful to is the encouragement to introduce and teach more about the contemporary culture during the lessons. In addition to that, I'm backed up with loads of activity examples and resources which could help my lessons be more interesting and help us grow fonder of English language.

Hands-on experience in studying contemporary English language and culture.

Getting to know more about contemporary English language and (C)culture and the fact that they change very rapidly. Beside this, the course and the coordinator and trainers, too, were really great.

Group work in breakout rooms with the colleagues and good discussions.
I also loved the food topic!

Did the course change your teaching in any way? If so, how?

Response

It did not really change it but rather enrich it with some new views on the language changes and life in Britain in general.

Yes, now I can organise my classes more practically and be more creative.

Yes, I am trying to use all the things we learned.

Sure, I had a chance to look at things from a different angle (thanks to all the comments/reflections in the FB group).

The course strengthened my confidence when teaching contemporary English.

It improved my knowledge of contemporary English.

I believe it did – I'm more aware of the need to use 'Englishes' in my classroom, not just native speakers' English.

Not very much because I am teaching very young learners.

It made me more confident to freely update textbooks and talk about contemporary, world English.

I am more aware of the modern culture and how it influences the language.
I cannot say it changed it, but it most certainly enriched it by encouraging me not to rely mostly on the coursebooks.
Yes, I have realised the importance of teaching contemporary trends and changes in English.
It definitely helped me make my classes more diverse by implementing some more learning methods for my students.
This course introduced me to a variety of exercises that can be done in class and I am very grateful for that. I think that my classes will be more interesting after this course.
Yes.
I have got plenty of materials, but I need to adapt them to younger students.
It didn't really change my teaching, but it has broadened my horizons for sure.
Since I'm not a teacher yet, I will likely use a majority of techniques and tricks mentioned by other teachers.
I don't currently teach English but I work in a school where English is the spoken language and I can say that the course has enriched my vocabulary and be more confident in native speaking surroundings.
It has certainly enriched it in many aspects and reminded me to use more humour and fun in my teaching.
Now I can add some new facts in my way of teaching.
Yes. I am more aware of how English is changing. Now I know how to approach to different topics in different ways than usual.
I do feel more confident.
I feel more confident now.
I'm sure it will. It hasn't changed it yet (I usually teach young students).
Yes. I found out novelties in English, new topics, changes to grammar, pronunciation ...

I am more confident about using authentic texts/materials. And I am eager to learn more about contemporary English culture.

Of course it did! It reminded me not to worry if I want to step out of the conventional teaching and share my beliefs, thus raising awareness of true values.

Better understanding of modern English vocabulary and grammar.

Well, it has changed my awareness of applying modern culture and new words into everyday teaching.

Not really because I follow quite a lot of things (NILE Tesol, BBC English, Pearson).

What would you change about the course? Is there anything you want to learn more about?

Response

I'd love to see/learn about the way lessons are conducted in the UK (both in state and private schools, and language schools). I'd also love to find out about the professional training teachers undergo after finishing their studies, whether it is obligatory or not.

Not really, the atmosphere was great and the whole experience exceeded my expectations.

I wouldn't change a thing.

No.

I wouldn't change anything. Zoom lessons, Facebook group and the shared materials for each week of the course were extremely useful.

No.

I'd like more demonstration of how to run small projects within online tuition, especially with teens.

No, this is enough.

Besides some technical suggestions, the curriculum is quite good, but it might get a bit deeper into the subject.

I'd change the time of the webinar as most of us were unable to participate. However, the recordings were useful too.

There should be more examples of British culture (with the small c) as we and our students are bombarded with American culture. I believe that our students should know about the British cultural reference, more about the examples of British humour, etc.

I would prefer it if the live sessions were at the weekend.

It was very useful to have a look of changes in language from native speakers' perspectives. Maybe it would be interesting to learn about popular children's literature of contemporary UK's authors. :)

I think that the course was very well organised and the extra materials and exercises were fun. And the topics were excellent; exactly how I imagined it will be.

I would love to hear more about different approaches to language teaching (structural, grammar-translation, direct method-which one is the most dominant, why ...); Evaluation of students' tests; time management in class; making annual or monthly plans, discipline in class ...

I really enjoyed learning about culture, humour, idioms ...

I would like lessons on music, popular tv shows, famous young stars – anything I could use with younger learners. More games and quiz are always welcome.

Learning more about modern British music would be a great addition to the course.

I am very pleased with the course and with what I got out of it but the only thing I struggled with was the technical side of it. I don't own a printer and most of the copy shops near me are closed (lockdown) so I found it difficult doing the assignments. I wish it was an easier way to do them all digitally.

I would change nothing as I am aware how vast the areas of language and culture are – so I suggest that PRELIM Serbia 2 webinar is arranged that would cover the impact of other areas such as British music, literature, performing arts, science and education.

No.

Everything was so interesting that I could not think of anything else to learn more about.

Everything was just as it should be.

I wouldn't change a thing.

I wouldn't change anything.

I would not change anything. No.

I would be glad to learn more about British music and its influence on the language.

I wouldn't change a thing, I guess. I'm pretty much satisfied with the whole concept.
Perhaps arts in British culture?

British music, British celebrities.

Constant learning is something that is very important for a teacher
so anything would be fine. Maybe, teaching grammar and speaking.

Nothing really, it was ok.

Uzbekistan

Project background

Description of the partners

The UK partner in this project was Centre of English Studies, located in London, Oxford, Worthing, Leeds, Harrogate, Edinburgh, Dublin and Toronto. Centre of English Studies (CES) was started in 1979 and now has 42 years' experience in the English language industry. CES was partnered with the Uzbekistan Teachers of English Association (UTEA), an organisation created in 2020, with 5,000 members.

Key features of the context

1. Variety: UTEA membership includes all settings for education from primary to tertiary
2. Profile raising: UTEA is a new organisation and a key outcome for us was to raise the profile within the country, which meant reaching as many members as possible
3. Language: All interested members of UTEA expressed a desire to develop their English language skills

Outline of the course and rationale

Due to the high numbers of potential CPs (over 3,000 responded to the initial Google Form placement test), the course was asynchronous with a focus on self-study and peer-to-peer collaboration. Self-study lessons were built around the needs analysis outcomes with a focus on both language input and use. In order to assess course success we built three assessment weeks into the course (Appendix 1). Certification for this course was reliant on the participation in these assessments.

Project findings

1. Working in partnership

The partnership between CES and UTEA has been fruitful and mutually beneficial throughout the whole process in the following ways:

a. Academic cooperation

The identification of linguistic levels and needs of the CPs was achieved through two processes. CES created a general needs analysis assessment for the CPs on Google Forms. This was then analysed with the additional perspective of UTEA on the basis of their understandings of the overall needs of practitioners within the different sectors. These needs were revisited formally during the two mid-course assessment stages and informally in conversations throughout the course itself.

This ongoing collaboration between CES and UETA beyond the initial needs analysis was crucial to the success of the course, in my opinion.

b. Comprehension of context

In addition to the linguistic needs of the CPs, collaboration between CES and UTEA allowed for a clear communication of the constraints of the context of work and study of the CPs, which directed the content, structure and mode of the course. A key example of this was identifying that the cohort of CPs who were English teachers wanted the course to incorporate some pedagogical training, which wasn't in the initial project brief. In response, we included in all sessions an opportunity for the CPs to create a community of reflective practice where they could discuss how they would teach the particular language point in their context. The fact that this issue was highlighted and rectified is evidence of a cooperative working relationship between all parties.

2. Working within the CoP

The community of practice of the other PRELIM participants has been a really valuable resource for a number of reasons.

It has been really important to create links with other institutions in the UK who are interested in project work. Getting to know other members of the CoP and to understand their perspectives and expectations in this project is especially helpful in terms of possible future collaboration and cooperation.

In addition, as the project itself began and we were all introduced to our respective ETA partners, it was helpful to understand how each project was proceeding, and what considerations, priorities, and expectations had been laid out by all parties. For example, while we were supporting a wide range of CP needs, where cohorts were smaller, more consideration could be given towards individual participant expectations.

There was a period in the middle of the project where communication lulled, as I think that most projects had diversified to such an extent as to make collaboration in many cases not essential. However, as all of the projects began to wind down and we all started to begin pulling the threads of the courses all together into a reporting format, collaboration and communication began again. It may make sense in future to identify small working groups within the greater CoP based on the scale or type of project being undertaken. This may allow the partners to discuss issues with people in a similar boat to them.

From my own personal perspective, there are connections that I have made on this project which will be very valuable to future teaching and training ventures that CES will be involved in.

3. Designing/delivering the course

Initial considerations

The sheer volume of potential participants caused us to internally re-examine the type of course that we thought would be viable to deliver to meet the needs of the teachers in their context. In addition to this anticipated number of participants, we started discussing some of the other potential barriers to the success of this project and it quickly became clear that internet connections and accessibility to synchronous sessions would be a major factor in determining the make-up of the course. With all of these elements considered, it was agreed that the course would be purely asynchronous self-study content with a light-touch tutoring.

We understood that this would mean that we would have a very limited actual relationship with the CPs, which was quite disappointing. However, we tried throughout the course to gather as much feedback data, whether through utilising the comment section on the lessons, or having a feedback week using a Padlet board, or with regular chats with the ETA Committee. Our primary concern was whether the lessons that we were designing were consistently relevant to the needs of the learners. In maintaining some sort of a relationship with the CPs and being able to gather feedback, we gathered that the English teachers would like a methodology aspect included in the lessons, which we added. We also learned that some of the teachers would like a live webinar at some stage during the course, which we duly delivered.

Both internally and in our collaborative relationships, there were a number of key considerations at the outset, as listed below.

a. Expectations

This was where both parties could put forward their general expectations for the project and we had the opportunity to create a clear and unified set of expectations for the project. Actually, as it turned out, we were very much on the same page with the realisation that this type of course was new territory for both of us, so our intended outcomes were quite open. We decided that we would create a course to meet the needs of large cohort of CPs with a wide variety of needs and aim to provide some sort of appropriate language development and aid in self-guided language development. We expected to be able to challenge the CPs and to provide something worthwhile for them to engage with. The feedback we have received in the end-of-course responses shows that this was successful.

Key features

- i. This course was hosted on an open WordPress site (<https://cesdirectlearning.com/>) with the lessons stored as blog posts. This ensured that even learners with poor internet connections were able to access the course. No login details necessary ensured that there was limited administration of that aspect of the course.
- ii. The lesson itself was delivered in PowerPoint format (which acted as the teacher and whiteboard combination) with the lesson material delivered in a Word document and a Google Document. These features allowed for easier access, and were successful throughout the course.
- iii. Each lesson encouraged the CP to go and to use the language in the comment section, which was then lightly tutored by a CES Trainer. This allowed for a 'language use and feedback' section, which would otherwise have been absent from this course. Having a tutor in the background of this course allowed the participants to engage as much as they wanted and get as much feedback as they needed.
- iv. The course had three assessment stages for a number of reasons. Chief among these for CES was to gauge level and appropriacy of material, while from the perspective of UTEA it was suggested that in order for the CPs to gain certification from this course, they would have to participate in all of these assessment stages.
- v. The course was timetabled over 11 weeks (with three assessment stages) (**see Appendix 1**).

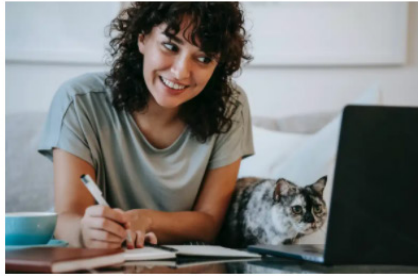
Latest from the Blog



Session 12: The Final Assessment

Welcome to the end of this 12 week English Language Development Course.

March 28, 2021



Session 11: Focus on Present Perfect

In this session we will introduce and practice using Present Perfect in the context of Education.

March 21, 2021



Session 10: Focus on Articles

In this session we will introduce and practice using Articles in the context of The Environment & Nature.

March 14, 2021

Figure 1: Lessons on the courses

5. Course outcomes

The outcomes of this course for us as an organisation are massive, both in terms of a shift in focus of what we can do as an organisation and in terms of a growing awareness of how impactful this type of course can potentially be.

Before engaging in this project, we had looked at growing our online learning offering with a number of ventures and course plans. Some of them were in their infancy and had great potential, while others were never to make it beyond the testing stage. Our engagement with PRELIM was intended to help us collaborate with an external partner in the creation of a viable online course, from which we may be able to gain the expertise and experience to expand our offering. However, the nature of this project was to prove pivotal in the shaping of the type of online offering that we were to look at.

We have used the lessons learned from PRELIM to create and launch our own self-guided direct learning platform (<https://cesdirectlearning.podia.com/>), which includes language development and teacher training courses. PRELIM has taught us that we can create this type of material and there actually is a market for accessible self-study content at an appropriate level.

This has also taught us that the type of expertise that we can put into a platform like this can be impactful to teachers and students who may otherwise not be able to access a quality education, whether through barriers of distance, cost or connectivity. By utilising the lessons learned in the creation of our PRELIM course, we can bring our teaching and training content into areas of the planet which would have been inaccessible before, and would still be quite difficult to reach with a synchronous course.

The course participants

In terms of the outcomes for the course participants, the size of the cohort makes it difficult to gauge how individual teachers progressed on the course, but from feedback collected through mid-course polling, comments on lesson posts, the Padlets for teaching ideas and the end-of-course assessment, it is clear that the teachers greatly appreciated the course. The general theme of most of the feedback was of being grateful to be given access to the course. There was little comment on the quality of the lessons or on issues with level or accessibility, just an expression of thanks to be included on a course which met their language needs on their terms.

As mentioned, we conducted an end-of-course survey with the CPs in order to best help us understand how we can move forward and begin offering a course like this on an ongoing basis. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. The key takeaways for CES came in response to this question:

In your opinion, what would have made this course better?

- Giving more vocabulary and lessons
- It would be better if we watch or listen new lessons from international teachers
- Giving more tasks
- I would like to have Vedio (sic.) lessons, live discussions or talking on Zoom platform in this course content, besides to add more Listening tracks
- I think it would be better if more practical exercises were given to participants related to the topics
- It would be better if conducted twice a week

This type of feedback on the course content and schedule will be really helpful for us moving forward. The overall nature of the feedback received in this survey tells us that, although it often felt for us like we were disconnected from the CPs, we were meeting their needs consistently and they felt that we were meeting their needs.

Indonesia

Project background

1. Description of the partners

The Association of Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia (TEFLIN) is a professional organisation run primarily by volunteer committee members based mainly in higher education (HE). It is a non-profit organisation founded with the aim of promoting the quality of teaching English in Indonesia. TEFLIN was established in Yogyakarta in the 1970s. The members of TEFLIN are around 21 institutions and 1,900 individuals focusing on Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) across all educational sectors in Indonesia. TEFLIN focuses on developing its members with various academic and professional activities such as conferences, seminars, training, journal publications and developing its international networks. The TEFLIN conferences have become an annual international academic event in Indonesia since 1998 to connect professionals and stakeholders in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT). Its journal publications (TEFLIN Journal) is published twice a year and has been accredited as a scientific journal by the Directorate of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Culture for Indonesia since 2002.

The English Language Teaching Centre (ELTC) is a department of the University of Sheffield and is one of the larger university language centres in the UK with over 200 teachers at peak in the summer (over 100 year-round) and 40 plus administrative, management and support staff. The ELTC teaches and supports over 4,000 students and teachers a year, on full- and part-time programmes, both face-to-face/blended in Sheffield and online internationally, with a dedicated Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) team. The Centre works with the student community within the University, external partner organisations and members of the public (learners and teachers) in the UK and internationally. The range of programmes and services offered at the ELTC is diverse and includes English Language Teaching (ELT), English for Academic Purposes (EAP), teacher training and development, research training and Specific Language Difficulties (SpLD). The Centre is accredited by the British Council and BALEAP and is an IELTS and Cambridge English Test and Teacher Training Centre. The ELTC supports the wider community in ELT, globally and locally, with student

and teacher scholarships, hosting and sponsoring conferences and events, and volunteering for teaching and committee work for IATEFL, English UK, BALEAP, St Mary's Community Centre Sheffield and the Campaign for At Risk Academics (CARA).

2. Key features of the context

TEFLIN is a large, well-established teachers' association with comprehensive management and administrative structures and potential course participant (CP) numbers of over 1,900 teachers and a further pool of thousands from 21 institutions within the membership alone. It was no surprise that initial expressions of interest in the project were strong and resulted in a final total of 297 CPs who started the course. The majority were women (229) but there were also 66 men and two CPs did not give the data. The cohort was narrowed to junior and senior high school English teachers with an English level of A2–B1. Indonesia is a country that consists of thousands of islands with a population of more than 280 million people. The CPs were located across the 12 TEFLIN regional groups, in the three time zones that cover this vast island nation. The geography ranged from large urban areas with more developed technological infrastructure, to smaller urban and rural areas with less development. In total 108 were from the large urban areas and 187 from the smaller urban and more rural areas (two CPs did not supply this data). Because of this, and according to the initial TEFLIN project documents, "the quality of education is varied among various places in Indonesia. This is also true about the quality of English teachers in Indonesia. In some places it is hard to have an English teacher with a B1 proficiency level for teaching primary or secondary students". However, the long-established teacher education work from TEFLIN over the years (as outlined in the partner profile above) has provided continuing professional development for over 50 years. Through these more established, traditional approaches, together with the recent use of more advanced technology, and in cooperation with the British Council Indonesia, TEFLIN has been able to provide webinars for more than 4,400 English teachers all over Indonesia on various topics since the pandemic started.

3. Outline of the course and rationale

Key information

- Eight weeks from 18 January to 14 March 2021
- Part-time (nine to ten hours a week)
- 297 course participants (CPs) at A2 to B1 level
- Junior and senior high school teachers
- 80–90 per cent Asynchronous with 10–20 per cent synchronous (live) ELTC tutor input
- Remotely delivered via mobile WordPress website
- Weekly Zoom sessions
- Communities of Practice and communication on WhatsApp and Google Docs

Course aim

- To increase confidence when using English that supports classroom teaching

Course objectives

- To review and consolidate key language for their classroom context (from vocabulary, grammar and/or pronunciation) and core skills (from reading, writing, listening and/or speaking) at A2+ level through appropriate tasks, activities and sessions
- To explore and utilise the participants' learner materials and syllabi to focus on specific areas of language development when building confidence in teacher usage
- To develop and signpost participants to a range of online/remote resources that can be used to develop language, both led by the UK partner, local teachers' association and by the participants themselves
- To demonstrate implicitly some teaching techniques, methods and materials for learning and teaching that can be subsequently used by the participants in their own teaching
- To establish appropriate communities of practice (both in urban and rural areas) that effectively allow participants to continue development after the project ends
- The eight-week language improvement course for teachers at around A2/B1 level aimed to improve confidence in English for classroom use. The timescale for the course allowed for part-time delivery to fit in with the CPs' professional and personal lives.

A2/B1 was selected as the target CP level as a minimum of B2 is expected by English teachers in Indonesia and this course would help towards that goal. The course was for Indonesian CPs who teach high school students (both TEFLIN members and non-TEFLIN members) and this restriction was chosen to create a sector-specific cohort with linked materials and communities of practice groups, with training in how to maintain these post-course. The language improvement course was designed and hosted on a bespoke WordPress website (the ELTC's Training Foundry site), which was mobile-friendly (see Figure 1 as to why this was key) and included progress tracking for individual CPs. Each week there was a themed unit with seven to eight hours of self-study with interactive and multimedia sections. A variety of tasks were set and included language activities in the four skills, as well as grammar, phonology and/or lexis (see Appendix A for a detailed breakdown of the units and content). It was designed so that CPs could see and experiences ideas for teaching activities and materials that they could use in their own language classrooms, and the unit themes focused on those found in the core textbooks used in their national curriculum (as supplied by TEFLIN). Embedded reflection and follow-up tasks were included, often linked to the other delivery channels or as signposting to external resources. Weekly Zoom sessions for up to 100 CPs were offered each (4 x 45 minutes at different times) to consolidate and extended the online units and provide speaking practice opportunities in smaller breakout rooms. CPs were added to a WhatsApp group and shared Google Doc (in groups of around 20) to be part of a community of others to share ideas and materials, along with practising their English, mainly the written medium. The four course tutors could also interact and comment on the CPs' contributions in those platforms. The course used appropriate technology and delivered learning outcomes that matched CPs' situations, in both rural and urban areas, as investigated in the initial needs analysis and CP focus group.

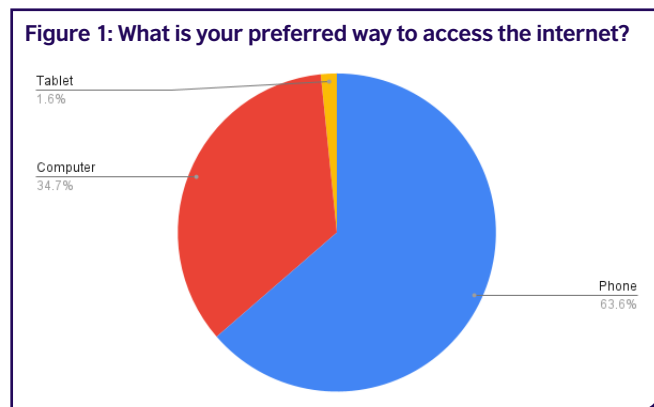


Figure 1: internet access

Project findings

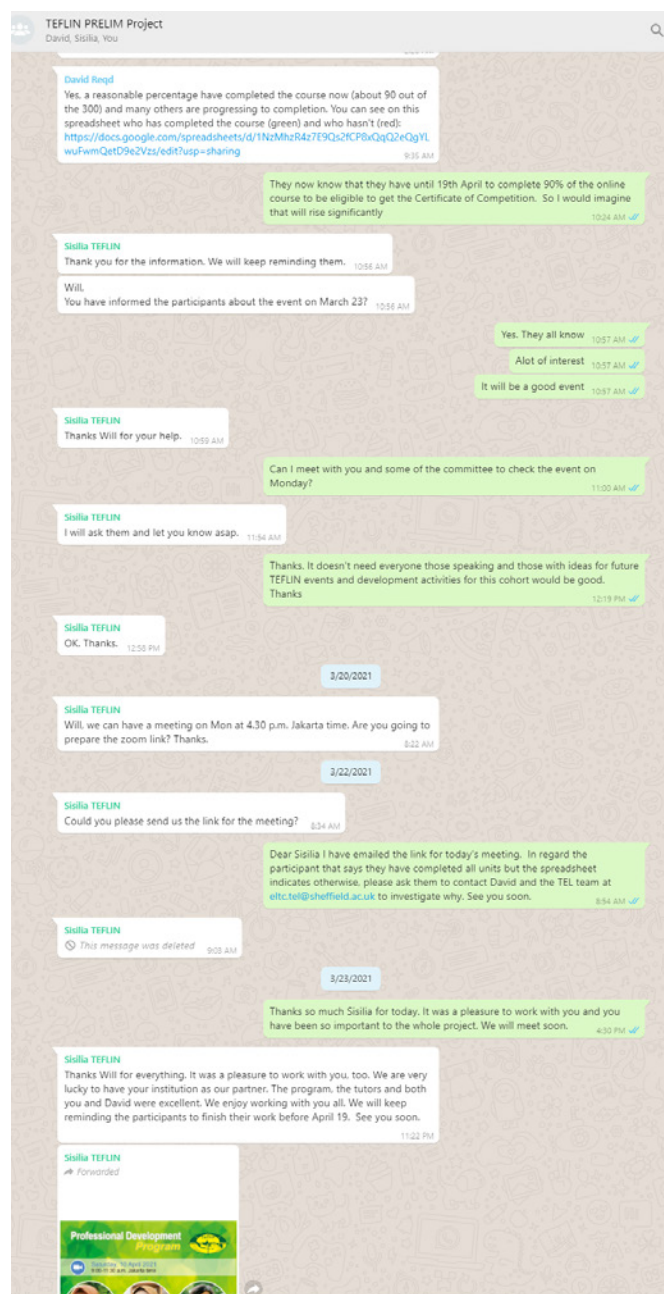
1. Working in partnership

Expectations and assumptions, from both the ELTC and TEFLIN about each other, were that we were both happy to create a larger-scale course and were motivated by the project. We both had with a good history in teacher development and English language education (including recently during the pandemic) and clear organisational structures. These insights and past experiences helped to set the project focus and scope quickly, meaning we could rely on parts of established practice from both partners in the course development process. The good online presence of TEFLIN and ELTC and comprehensive project applications from both were helpful in the situational analysis at the beginning of the process. This was beyond expectations of the course designers in the UK and the project in general was better organised and delivered because of the working relationship established early between the key stakeholders in the UK and Indonesia. A clear and detailed pre-partnership process with enough time to achieve this is preferable to ensure a project can progress effectively and efficiently from the outset. The use of emails and Zoom meetings were used appropriately, and, in particular, regular WhatsApp messaging between the key project managers proved invaluable for timely decision making and problem avoidance (see Figure 2 for example). In fact, the partnership has extended beyond the end of the project towards future co-operation (like student scholarships at the ELTC offered to the Indonesian project lead's own institution). The beginning phases of the partnership are the most important for a project with timescales and outcomes established. Small negotiations about the number of CPs, completion dates and the approach to the technology were successfully undertaken (within previously agreed parameters) in both the design and delivery phases. This mutual flexibility from both sides was evident throughout and partners were keen to adapt the project processes as needed. Again, this went beyond expectations of both sides and allowed us to maximise CP experience and success.

Learning points:

- Have a clear mutual understanding of each partners' history, organisation and recent developments
- Exploit other sources of information, beyond the project bidding documents, to complete a situational analysis
- Include enough time to complete detailed and targeted application and context setting pre-partnership documents
- Supplement email and meetings with a more direct and interactive communication channel for appropriate project team members
- Flexibility and adaptability are key to maximise the CP experience, but establish red lines early

Figure 2: Example of partner communication and collaboration on WhatsApp



2. Working within the CoP

The use of a CoP for the UK partner was an extremely positive and useful approach for not only the individual projects, but for the individuals that interacted with each other. The use of Slack as the platform allowed for the organisation of themes and communication was effective and relied on engagement from the project partners, which, although varied depending on need and timing, overall had a great impact on this project. In particular, by sharing ideas with projects that had similar initial issues and challenges, the partners could gain insights and possible solutions quickly and with empathy. A key successful factor of the CoP was the lead partner NILE, and it is doubtful this approach would have been sustained without them. Another important factor was the various communication channels (beyond Slack) employed, including group and individual Zoom meetings, emails and sharing of files, which allowed for differentiated interactions and a cohesive understanding of the project more generally. The shared input from the 17 UK partners, with similar questions, stories and outcomes meant NILE could communicate these to the British Council (and English UK and IATEFL) efficiently and we could show a collective voice. It is expected that a fair amount of repetition of planning, resources and administrative processes were carried out by the individual UK partners and the CoP could be better used to share these and increase economies of scale for all.

Learning points:

- It is an effective way to develop project skills, approaches and communications
- Include a lead and facilitator
- All partners should have an opportunity to be part of a CoP
- A variety of communication and interaction channels are preferable
- More collating and sharing of core documents and processes

3. Working with the course participants

One of the assumptions that was made about working with a relatively large cohort of course participants was the potential for not much personal contact. This was partly due to the asynchronous and individual nature of a majority of the course hours (as described in the course outline above), but also the limited large synchronous live sessions, with potentially up to 100 CPs each time. However, the supplementary use of WhatsApp for communication and interaction (often live) in smaller communities of practice of around 20, meant tutors and CPs could build a relationship and have direct contact at more regular intervals. It was noticeable there were different interaction and engagement patterns between different members of the cohort, while some CPs were active every day on all channels of communication, as well as attending the weekly Zoom sessions, others completed online work by themselves, in short bursts, over the course (seen from the course tracking). This is something to be expected due to the diversity of different contexts each course participant is facing and should be considered when dealing with larger-scale projects. One approach may not suit all CPs, so where possible a core delivery medium should be used but with supplementary and complementary activities that can be incorporated.

Many teachers had additional professional and personal commitments to pursue and maybe the time difference for some of the CPs across Indonesia (three different hours) meant that it was not always possible for all to attend the live sessions (despite four different ones being offered). Therefore, the importance of the WhatsApp communities of practice and the recording and sharing of these live Zoom sessions (see Figure 3 below) helped in prompting and encouraging participants to progress with and reflect on other parts of the course. This was significant and without these direct lines of communication to their mobile phones or video streams, it is unlikely that so many would have completed the self-study and have taken as much from the course in general.

Learning points:

- Consider complementing asynchronous self-study with live sessions
- Record and share live sessions with all CPs
- Have a communication channel for more direct, individual contact
- Allow for a range of engagement and interactions in large-scale projects
- Build smaller communities of practice of mobile platforms

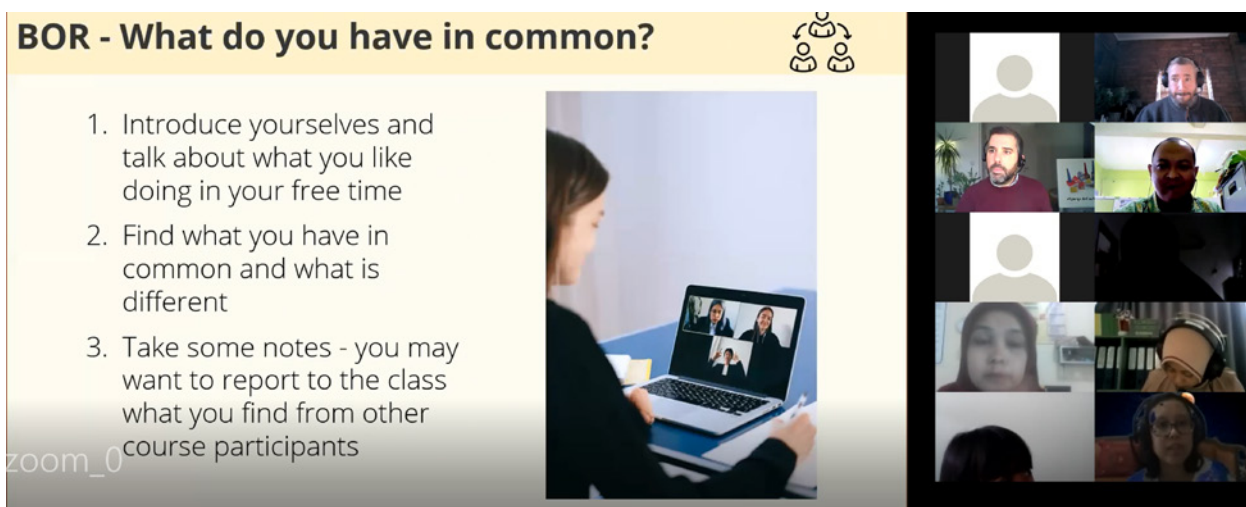
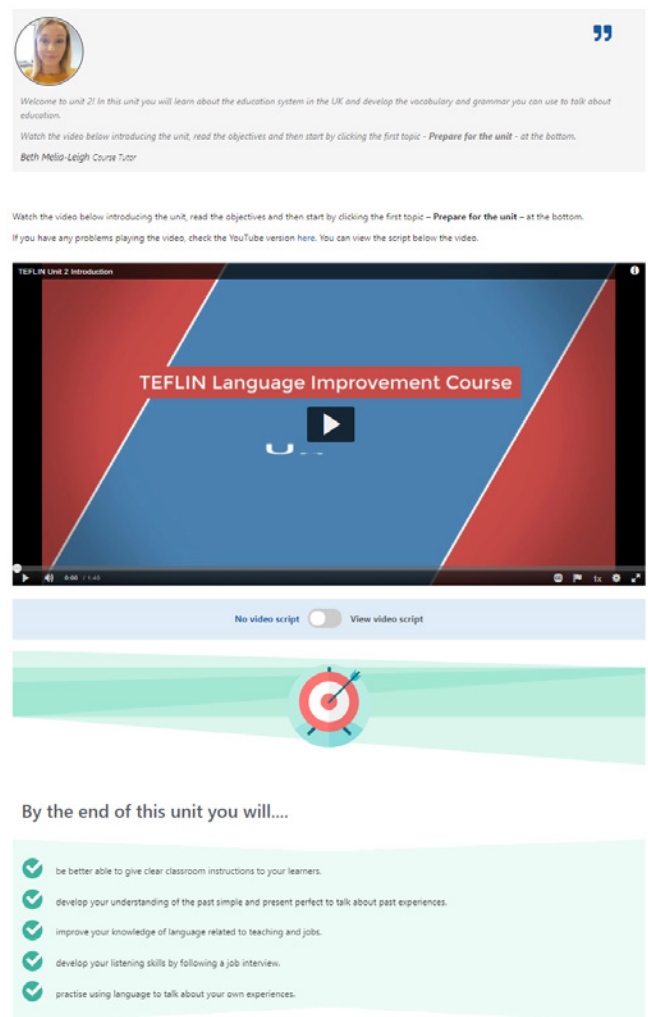


Figure 3: Screenshot a weekly Zoom live session Breakout Room (BOR) speaking task

4. Designing/delivering the course

Many of the assumptions made in the initial project and bidding documentations proved to be mostly realised in the partner planning stages with the aims, outcomes and timescales. It was important for the UK course design team to include synchronous work in the course to allow for live interactions and add value to the planned synchronous online web-based units. However, one of the key negotiations in the design phase was the total number of CPs that this agreed approach would allow, and the maximum was set at 400 with restrictions on the CP cohort as described in the course outline above. These baseline factors are important early in the design process, before moving onto specific content and task development. At this point, the four course tutors and one technology learning designer were brought into the project to look at the results of the situational information supplied and the needs analysis questionnaires from the interested CPs. The delivery timetable, themes and task approaches were agreed with the delivery team and presented for approval to the full TEFLIN committee. Inclusion of the course tutors in this was critical to the overall achievability and success of the subsequent delivery phase. Partly due to the tight timescale of the course delivery and partly to allow flexibility later, the first two units were designed before the start date of the course (including an introductory unit 0 to orientate the CPs to the approach and technological platforms). From then each unit was designed and transferred to the online WordPress site a week in advance and was due to the hard work of the technology team and tutors. Later refinements to the unit design were made in light of tutor and early CP feedback, including to the amount of time each unit was taking and type of interaction and communication on WhatsApp and Google Docs. This adaptability and non-finalised course design could be considered for future projects, in particular new or developing contexts. Each unit included a 'prepare for the unit' section with tutor video, script in case of internet issues and clear outcomes to focus the unit work (see Figure 4 as an example). The inclusion of orientation units and tasks for a large number of CPs should be considered to help the CPs to be more autonomous, cut down on issues arising that need direct intervention and to make the course have a more human face.

Figure 4: Unit Introduction



Welcome to unit 2! In this unit you will learn about the education system in the UK and develop the vocabulary and grammar you can use to talk about education.

Watch the video below introducing the unit, read the objectives and then start by clicking the first topic – **Prepare for the unit** – at the bottom.

If you have any problems playing the video, check the YouTube version [here](#). You can view the script below the video.

TEFLIN Unit 2 Introduction

TEFLIN Language Improvement Course

No video script View video script

By the end of this unit you will....

- ✓ be better able to give clear classroom instructions to your learners.
- ✓ develop your understanding of the past simple and present perfect to talk about past experiences.
- ✓ improve your knowledge of language related to teaching and jobs.
- ✓ develop your listening skills by following a job interview.
- ✓ practise using language to talk about your own experiences.

Along with the main course delivery medium (the mobile-friendly site), the complementary multimedia platforms consolidated and extended the content in the units (see Figure 5 for example course interactive activities). Two tutors delivered the large Zoom sessions in each of the four time slots with a balance of tutor-led input and CP small group tasks in breakout rooms. The team-teaching approach for large numbers of CPs worked well, so each tutor can play different roles, including supporting tech issues, monitoring groups and managing the chat. This approach will be used again. Finally, WhatsApp groups and Google Docs were expected to create communities of practice between the CPs by tutors setting reflection and prompting questions related to the units, and were planned each week by the tutors. Varying engagement in these aspects of the course were seen and future thought is needed into how the CoPs for CPs are made up and how much tutor time and input is needed to manage these effectively.

Learning points:

- Include a variable mix of synchronous and asynchronous aspects of course, depending on cohort size
- Agree maximum (or optimal) CP numbers to allow the balance in point one above to happen effectively
- Bring in the course delivery tutors to refine course design and respond to CP and partner needs
- Build in adaptability to the course unit and tasks and do not complete all materials too early
- Add a human face to any online course units with tutor photos, videos and/or quotes

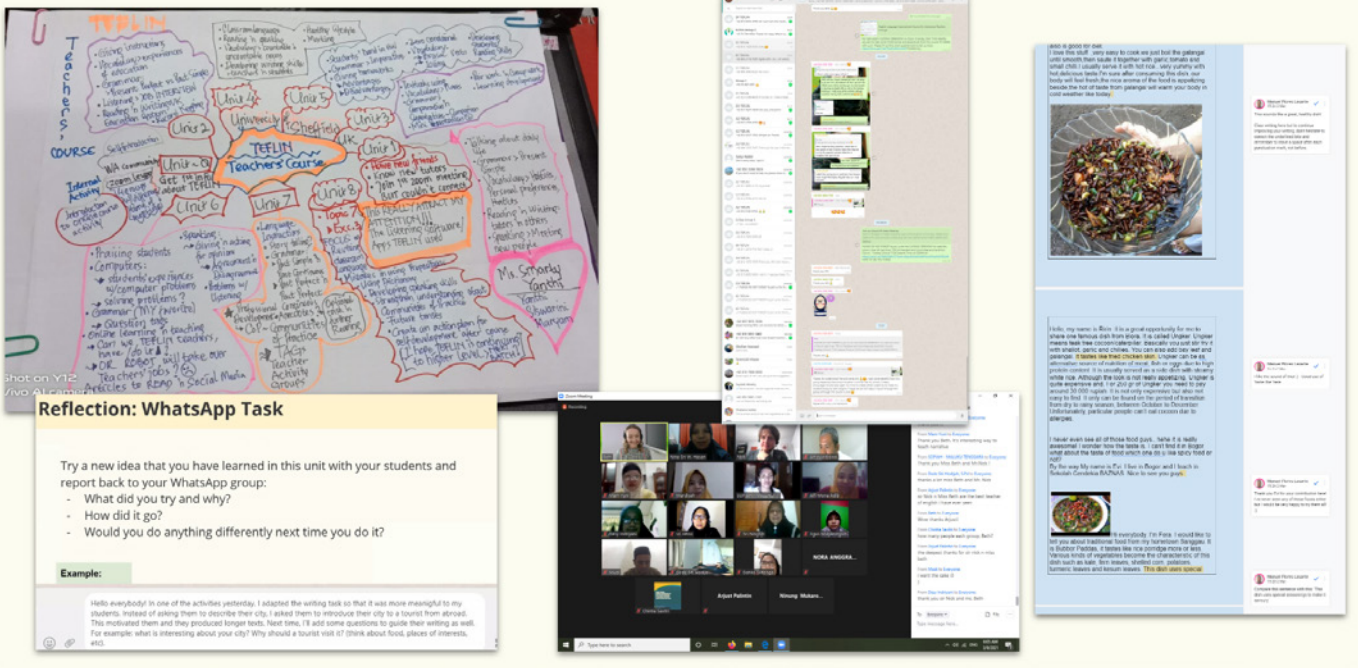


Figure 5: Examples of course activities

5. Course outcomes

The WordPress site has an integrated monitoring system to check registrations and unit progress and was the main way to assess the course in a quantitative way. This showed that of the 297 CPs who were selected and supplied their details for the course, 207 completed. A further four failed to register for the online course, and 86 did not finish the expected amount of online course content to have been deemed to complete (90 per cent+) and therefore receive a certificate (see Figure 6 for the completion breakdown).

Other monitoring of course outcomes came in the WhatsApp groups and Google Docs. In total, over 100,000 words in English were added to the group-shared Google Docs and more than 10,000 messages sent in the 19 WhatsApp Communities of Practice groups; again, all in English. The level of participation varied by individual CPs over the course, and depended somewhat on their technical issues (See Figure 7) and available time. WhatsApp had the least technical issues, but with variable levels of engagement from CPs, whereas the Zoom sessions, as expected, caused the most issues due to the strain of the devices and internet.

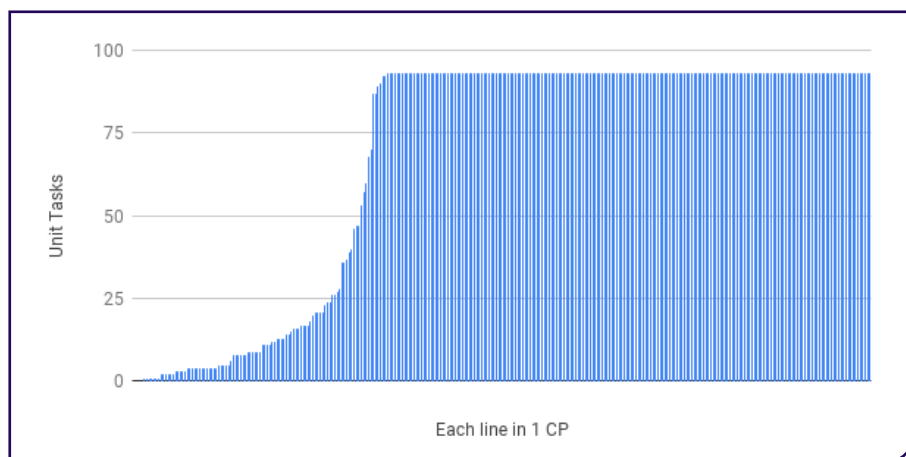


Figure 6: How many online unit tasks did each of the 297 CPs complete from a total of 93?

Regular communication between the ELTC and TEFLIN on the CPs progress and issues allowed for encouragement, prompting and ultimately meant more CPs completed the online units. Evaluation came from reflection tasks (embedded in the units and in the WhatsApp and Google Doc tasks) that asked CPs to say what and how they have learned and if it could be useful for them within their specific teaching context. At the end of unit 6, CPs were asked to evaluate the course through a questionnaire (140 responded) with a key question relating to the different delivery platforms on the course (see Figure 8).

When asked, at the end of the course to say what was interesting, surprising or motivating for them on the course through open written comments, the themes raised were varied but included the following areas: the impact on their English confidence from the online units and course generally, taking part in the live zoom sessions, meeting CPs from across Indonesia and the interactions with the tutors. A representative (and memorable) comment from one CP really summed many up: *‘Before I joined this course I feel teaching listening and speaking skills are not easy. But from this course I learned from how the tutors showed me how they delivered every lesson in every unit. I plan to apply it. Moreover, for me the most interesting part of this course is the online ZOOM session. I can communicate with other Indonesian teachers from other towns and especially communicate with the tutors directly as the native speakers, it’s challenging. We can share our ideas which can improve our confidence to speak in English. And also improve our listening skills. Finally, I can say it’s my precious experience. Hopefully, I can join another course someday.’*

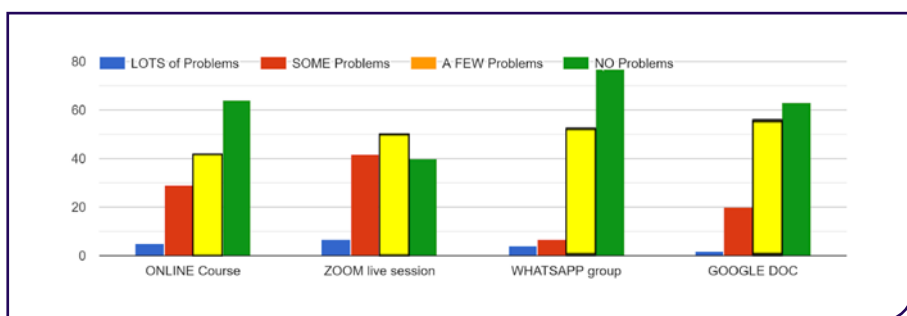


Figure 7: Has your access to TECHNOLOGY and the INTERNET caused any problems with these aspects of the course?

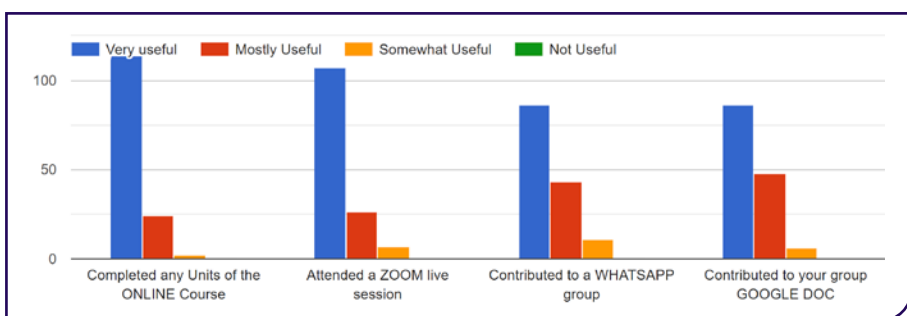


Figure 8: How useful have these course activities been?

Another CP comment that summarised the overall sentiments in the feedback was: *'This course is very interesting and motivating. The updating material enhanced my knowledge in learning English as Foreign language, for instance: classroom language, useful learning English tips, etc. There are some activities that can be adapted for my classroom; for example, matching words, the use of google docs. This course also motivated me to learn English more. Sometimes I visit the web page given to refresh my knowledge in English. Besides, I have some new colleagues in this course to share with. The professional mentors of this course deliver material skilfully.'* It wasn't just the CPs that took lots of positive aspects from the course; the technology and course tutor team reflected on designing and delivering the project and their thoughts were captured by their messages in Figures 9 and 10 below (shared at a closing ceremony).

The Technology Team

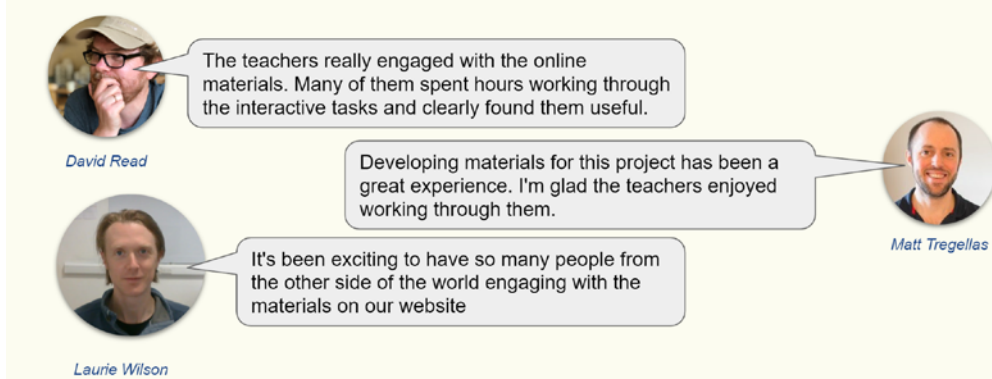


Figure 9: Technology team reflections

The Tutors

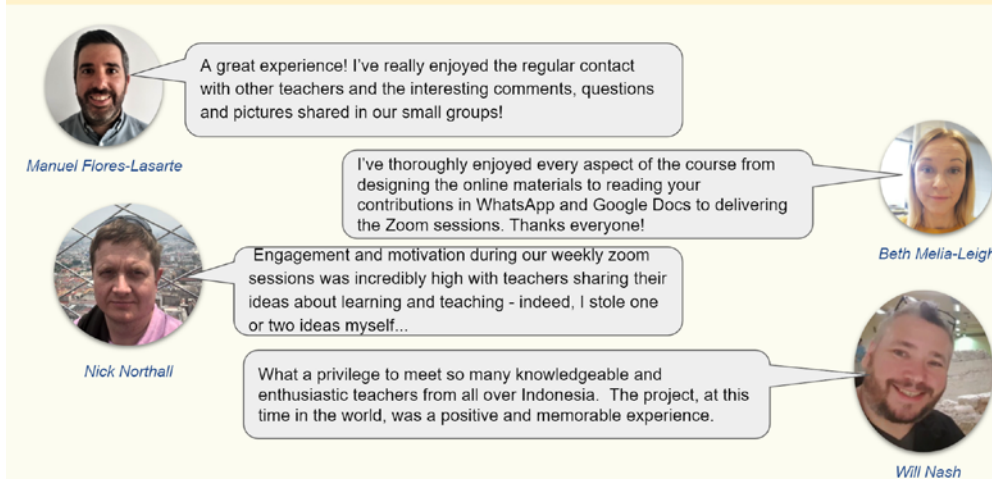


Figure 10: Course tutor reflections

Key learning points

The tutors themselves noted that, towards the end of the project, it was surprisingly emotional/challenging for many because of the relationships that had built between certain CP individuals. Advice for possible next CPD steps (post-course) for the CPs were eventually included to allow for continuation for their motivation and enthusiasm and should be considered earlier in the future project planning. Overall, the work with CPs was the most rewarding part of the project and was celebrated in well-attended 'Closing Ceremony' where over 200 CP smiling faces, cheerful voices or positive chat message were seen and heard. Even with large-scale projects, a single event that all CPs can attend (or watch back later as it was recorded) should be included to show the larger and wider community that they were and are part of.

Learning points from sections above:

- Have a clear mutual understanding of each partners' history, organisation and recent developments
- Exploit other sources of information, beyond the project bidding documents, to complete a situational analysis
- Include enough time to complete detailed and targeted application and context setting pre-partnership documents
- Supplement email and meetings with a more direct and interactive communication channel for appropriate project team members
- Flexibility and adaptability are key to maximise the CP experience, but establish redlines early
- Consider complementing asynchronous self-study with live sessions
- Record and share live sessions with all CPs
- Have a mobile communication channel for more direct, individual contact with CPs
- Allow for a range of engagement and interactions in large-scale projects to complement the core delivery platform
- Build smaller communities of practice on mobile platforms for CPs
- Include a variable mix of synchronous and asynchronous aspects of course, depending on the cohort size
- Agree a maximum (or optimal) CP number to allow the balance in point above to happen effectively
- Bring in the course delivery tutors to refine course design and respond to CP and partner needs
- Build in adaptability to the course unit and tasks and do not complete all materials too early
- Add a human face to any online course units with tutor photos, videos and/or quotes

Appendix A – Course Themes and Content

Unit 0: Introduction to the course

3 Topics

1. Your Whatsapp community
2. Technical check: interactive activities
3. Zoom lesson: preparation

Unit 1: Talking about yourself and others

11 Topics

1. Prepare for the unit
2. Greeting learners and starting a lesson
3. Talking about our daily life
4. Focus on grammar: the present simple
5. Developing your vocabulary: Hobbies
6. Developing your Vocabulary: Personal preferences and habits
7. Reading and Writing: Get to know your tutors and each other
8. Speaking: meeting new people
9. Develop your learning: reflection
10. Preparation for live session
11. Further practice

Unit 2: Education and Work

10 Topics

1. Prepare for the Unit
2. Giving instructions
3. Vocabulary: talking about your experiences of education
4. Grammar: Present perfect vs past simple
5. Listening: Job interviews
6. Reading and writing: UK Education System
7. Develop your learning: Record keeping: writing information about new words
8. Reflection
9. Preparation for the live session
10. Further Practice

Unit 3: Places and Travel

11 Topics

1. Prepare for the unit
2. Using textbooks
3. Vocabulary to talk about places
4. Listening
5. Grammar: comparatives and superlatives
6. Other ways of making comparisons
7. Your own mini-presentation
8. Organising pair work and group work
9. Develop your learning
10. Reflection
11. Further practice

Unit 4: Food and healthy living

10 Topics

1. Prepare for the unit
2. Classroom language: encouraging students to answer questions
3. Reading and speaking: It tastes like home!
4. Focus on language: countable and uncountable nouns
5. Developing your writing skills: What dish makes you think of home?
6. Teacher Development: Developing your students' writing skills
7. How healthy is your lifestyle?
8. Marking students' writing
9. Reflection
10. Preparation for the live session

Unit 5: Language

10 Topics

1. Prepare for the unit
2. Asking students to hand in homework
3. Using clear language: Imperatives
4. Reading: The advantages and disadvantages of giving children homework
5. Language work: the zero conditional
6. Listening: Languages around the world
7. Vocabulary: Phrasal verbs and Idioms
8. Extensive Reading: Developing your students' reading skills
9. Reflection
10. Preparation for the live session

Unit 6: Technology

11 Topics

1. Prepare for the unit
2. Praising your students
3. Computers
4. Question tags
5. Online learning and teaching
6. Robot teachers
7. Articles
8. Social media
9. Language functions
10. Develop your learning
11. Reflection and further practice

Unit 7: Telling Stories

9 Topics

1. Prepare for the unit
2. Classroom language: Instructions for tests
3. What do we mean by storytelling?
4. I was getting ready when...
5. Telling a story: Past perfect and past perfect continuous
6. Anecdotes
7. Continuing Professional Development: Communities of Practice (CoP)
8. Reflection and further practice
9. Optional task and further reading

Unit 8: Future Plans

9 Topics

1. Prepare for the unit
2. Classroom language
3. Review of prepositions
4. Develop your learning: Use of dictionaries
5. Developing and teaching speaking skills
6. Post-course Communities of Practice
7. Making plans: Future forms
8. Making plans: Action points
9. Final reflection

Thailand

Project background

1. Description of the partners

Lila* is a medium-sized independent language school situated in the centre of Liverpool. Prior to COVID, Lila* operated with an average of 18 teachers, which has been reduced to six permanent teachers at the time of writing. Primarily, Lila* operates as a school for General English and exam preparation classes for adults and as a CELTA teacher training centre.

ETA

Members of Thai TESOL

Chair: Kenny Nomnian

Thai TESOL is a non-profit organisation that was established to support and strengthen English language education in Thailand. They also promote networking with other ELT organisations both nationally and internationally. Thai TESOL members share the common goals of the association in enhancing the teaching and learning of English throughout the nation and disseminate academic information useful for ELT development.

Thai TESOL was quite specific about the requirements of the teachers in terms of days, times, content, etc., and our initial suggested timetable and syllabus was amended to better suit the needs of the CPs enrolled.

2. Key features of the context

The project's primary aim is to raise the confidence of English teachers in using English within their classrooms, to ultimately improve the quality of English language lessons in the target country. To do this, it was determined that a combination of synchronous and asynchronous lessons would best make use of the time available.

Thailand has a solid infrastructure surrounding the internet, with the majority of those surveyed reporting that they have a strong Wi-Fi connection and are comfortable using Zoom as a platform for the synchronous lessons.

Target CPs

Because of the large volumes wishing to attend the course, it was limited to teachers with a language level ranging from A2 to B1.

On top of this, it was determined that those most in need of language development (i.e. those with least access to professional development, funding and resources) are those living in more remote and rural areas of the country.

Finally, the teachers for whom a lack of linguistic skills has the greatest impact on their teaching and, therefore, their learners, are those teaching at a secondary level. Some reported having a lower language level than their own students.

A total of 325 CPs initially applied to join the course with levels ranging from A2 to C2 with a 62 per cent female to 38 per cent male ratio. This figure was later reduced to 150 made up of three groups of 50 CPs; the ratio of female to male remained the same.

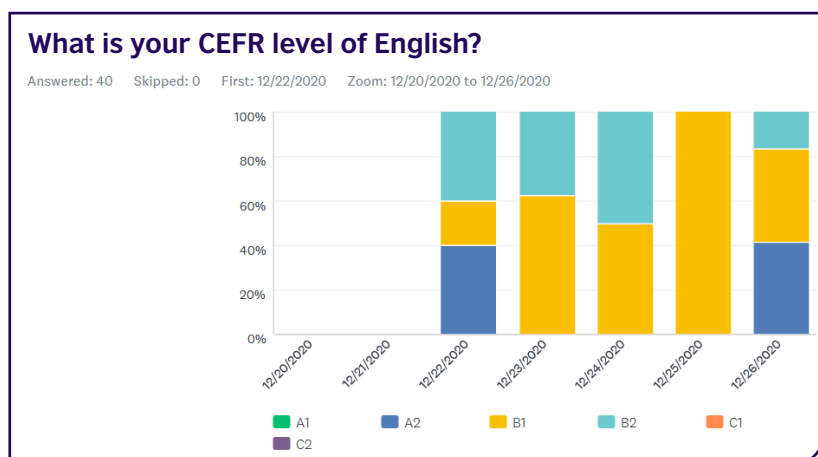


Figure 1: CP CEFR Level

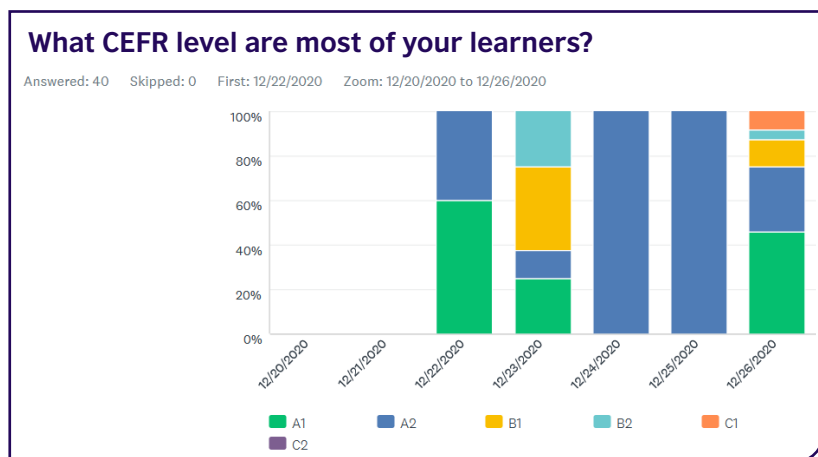


Figure 2: Student CEFR Level

3. Outline of the course and rationale

The live aspect of the course was carried out each Saturday from 4pm to 6pm (Thailand time) and three groups of 50 CPs were invited to take part in the course, which was to run for ten weeks.

Each week a quiz was created to revise the language and concepts covered in the lessons (see Appendix). These had a wider reach than the main classes, as many who could not attend the classes were able to work on the quizzes in their own time.

Alongside the live lessons and quizzes, two projects were set. The first project required the CPs to observe a recorded lesson and record the stages undertaken while making a note of any errors in language use (grammar, vocabulary and/or pronunciation) made by the students in the observed lesson. They were then asked to correct the error as they saw fit.

The second project required the CPs to create a lesson for their pupils. They were asked to teach a lesson based on the content of one of the live lessons from the project, or, if they chose, a lesson of their own making.

Finally, a Q&A session was arranged as a way of concluding the course. All CPs, regardless of their level or initial grouping, were invited to this. From approximately half-way through the course, the CPs were asked to consider their “one burning question” and asked to submit this to be answered at the pre-arranged Q&A session. It should be noted that this session was an added extra and came as a result of one of the several meetings held within the CoP.

Project findings

1. Working in partnership

A close working partnership was established quickly with the Thai TESOL. A key outcome of the cooperation was the collaboration towards the inclusion of methodological aspects into the course, which was achieved through the inclusion of methodology-oriented asynchronous projects and use of weekly quizzes alongside the more language-focused activities. Similarly, we were able to work together to identify a timetable that met the requirements of the teachers vis a vis their local contexts.

In a further demonstration of cooperation resulting from the course, but not directly related to it, Thai TESOL passed on the details of Lila* to a teaching and exam centre in Thailand who required help with creating a working CEFR test for its students. At the time of writing, this has gone beyond the negotiation stage and work has begun on providing the centre with its requirements.

2. Working within the CoP

The partnerships formed within the CoP, predominantly through the regular meetings held, helped to shape the course into something greater than its initial content. Lila* had an existing working relationship with other schools in the region, but via Slack to share ideas and regular meetings these working relationships were strengthened and others formed with other participating schools. This collaboration was supportive through all stages of the project, from preparation to report writing.

Just one example of the usefulness of the collaboration was how it shaped our monitoring and evaluation approaches with the following outcomes:

- We included an element of feedback tagged on to the end of the weekly quiz. This was a source of valuable feedback throughout the course rather than the initial, midway and final feedback we had intended to conduct. This approach will now be implemented into future courses run at Lila*, as they are a quick and simple method of collecting valuable feedback and act as an added extra for CPs enrolled.
- We reduced an extensive set of data-gathering questions to just two questions to avoid overloading the CPs. These proved highly successful in encouraging engagement and generating quality information, a selection of which are found below.

3. Designing/delivering the course

The processes of course design and delivery have already shaped the functioning of Lila* and will continue to do so beyond the course.

As background, the project came at a time when lots of existing teachers at the school were furloughed or had been made redundant. It is fair to say that morale was at a low point. I was initially hesitant to ask the teachers as it meant they would be working on a Saturday morning. In fact, they embraced the project and all teachers seemed to resonate with the project, offering suggestions and advice regardless of their direct involvement in it. Every teacher volunteered for the work (in addition to other work they had); this left me in the enviable position of being able to select the most experienced teachers.

It was noted early in the delivery of the course that the course had had a positive impact on the teachers involved. One teacher in particular, LB, was observed to be taking a far more involved role in the design and delivery than in previous courses and projects of this nature. It was felt that, possibly due to the nature of how the course was being developed and run, that LB was contributing in a more productive manner than previously observed. LB has been a valued member of the teaching staff at Lila* for several years but had previously taken more of a back seat. Yet on the PRELIM course, she was questioning the course delivery, adapting the suggested materials, improving the method of delivery and taking an overall more leader-based role.

This is of significant implication as, not only has it proven to be of great benefit to the teachers involved, but it will impact on the management of future courses.

As with most language schools, we frequently take new bookings for closed groups. Some such courses are new and some have been running in one shape or another for a number of years. However, none has resulted in such significant development of any individuals as has been observed with the PRELIM course.

One of these teachers has based part of her studies for a Trinity Dip. TESOL on the PRELIM project where she reports: 'I want to emphasise that helping teachers develop their skills has always been my objective and I have decided to study more to be able to do it so. To be able to finally do that, was like a dream come true.'

And again: 'I have also realised how much I love designing lessons, courses, etc. And now that the material is 'ready' would be a good idea to go over them and make it even better. To a point it is worth selling/sharing.'

These two comments will influence decisions made surrounding future courses, and how we create them. We will be looking to distribute more widely among the teaching staff the managerial functions of future courses and projects. This is one of the major bright spots of this project and has triggered a revision of our staff appraisal methods to include questions to find out more about our teachers, their strengths, passions and preferences.

4. Course outcomes

We had initially hoped for the main outcome of this course to be the linguistic development of the course participants and their subsequent increased confidence with teaching school children in their classes. The charts below indicate that this outcome was achieved, with all respondents identifying improvement and over 85 per cent to a significant degree.

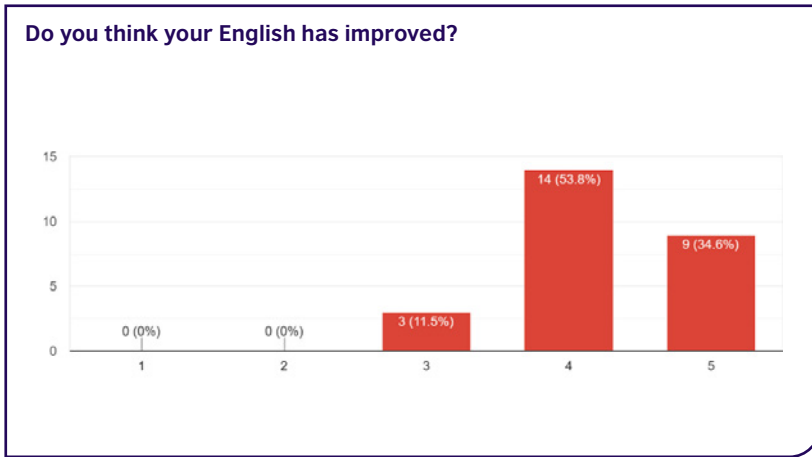


Figure 3: Post-course feedback – language improvement

Our key objective was confidence building in the classroom. To gain an indication of impact we asked the same question at the beginning and end of the course and looked for any changes. We were encouraged by the increases across the board, and especially with the area of teaching writing, as this was identified in our needs analysis as a key area for focus (see below).

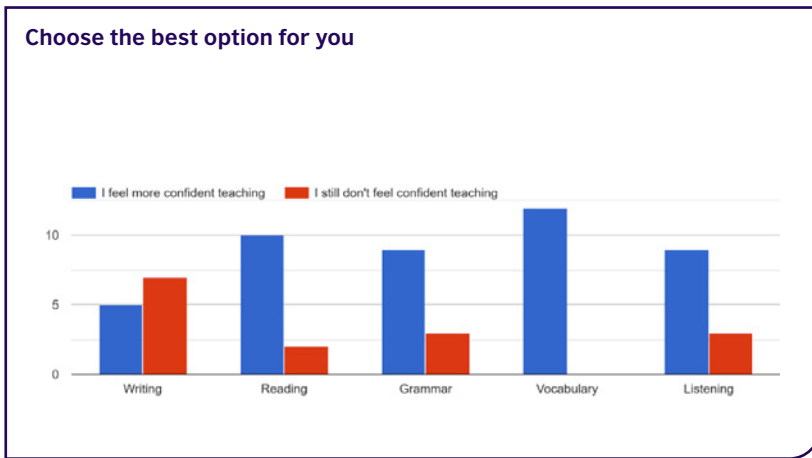


Figure 4: Pre-course feedback – teaching confidence

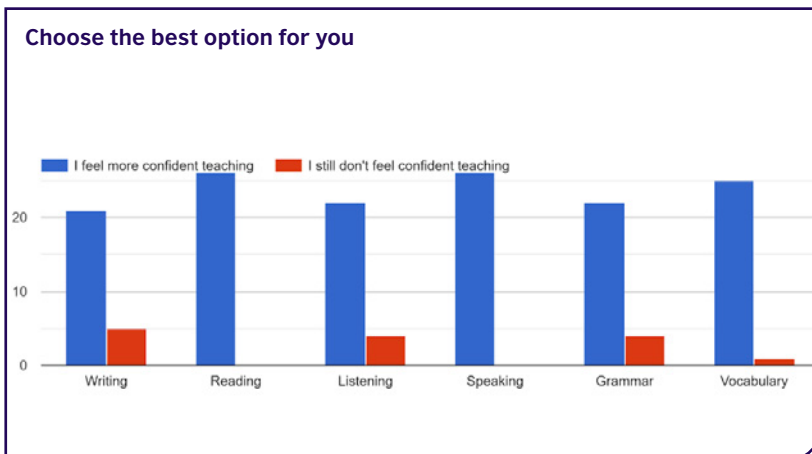


Figure 5: Post-course feedback – teaching confidence

There is scope to further focus on skills and systems in future courses to maintain this raise in confidence.

The qualitative feedback raised by the CPs was overwhelmingly positive, and both the methodology and language aspects of the course are identified as key (see Appendix for full responses).

Q1. What is the most important thing you have learnt on this course?

- *I try to speak English in the class.*
- *The most important thing from learning the course is that how to ask the student by using CCQ, accuracy, fluency, game, reading and speaking. All of these are my favourite things that I have learnt from this course. I apply these to my class. The students like it because I have a new thing to learn for them.*
- *I have known the methods, stages of teaching and I have learnt how to teach my students clear and fun when they study English. This course made me more confident and gave me a lot of ways to create various activities to present my students.*

Q2. What is one thing that you will do differently after this course

- *I feel more confident speaking.*
- *I can improve my teaching and make me more confident.*
- *I won't ask 'Do you understand 'to my students.*
- *Teaching listening and grammar. Honestly, before this course, I taught grammar by giving handout and exercises to my students. And for listening class, I let my students to listen to CD and then answer the questions.*
- *Use more English with students in the class.*
- *I will think and create my lesson to my students fun and don't make them afraid of mistaking in using English.*

Although not specifically requested to comment on their perceived improved confidence, it can be seen that for many of the responders this was a successful outcome of the course. This is of particular interest, as at no point were the CPs made aware that the primary aim of the course was to achieve this, yet they stated that this was the outcome.

In a similar vein, one particular piece of feedback received needs to be shared due to another aim met by the project:

*... It's the opportunity to learn by using learning online and everybody can share the idea, can work together and get the new methods to teach the students **and share the knowledge to my teachers at my school.***
- Pairin Seelakham.

It was always hoped that the CPs able to attend the course would pass on skills, knowledge and methods acquired on the course. With this in mind, at the end of the course a PDF of materials used on the course alongside other favourite materials of the participating teachers was compiled and provided to the CPs with the request that they pass them on to colleagues and friends in the industry. See Appendix for these materials.

Key learning points

In light of the success of the project and positive outcome of a distributed leadership model, we have decided to take this approach in future projects. For example, in May there is a closed group of French business students attending the school. They have come to Lila* for four years consecutively and little has changed in the running of the programme. However, it has been raised that the syllabus is quite inflexible and in previous years the CPs have mentioned this and requested more in the way of project work.

The decision has been made to supply a core syllabus but encourage a degree of flexibility based on the teachers' experience and judgement. Two of the teachers who taught on the PRELIM course have been offered this course to lead and run between themselves. We will collect feedback throughout the ten weeks of the course to judge to what extent the CPs' expectations are being met.

The outcome of this project has been overwhelmingly positive. The CPs all requested more of the same in future courses and the teachers have shown their true worth and capabilities. It is fair to say that the outcomes of the course will influence the management of the school going forward as we learn from both the successes and areas of future development. We hope for more courses of this nature managed by those at NILE and involving a CoP to collaborate with, benefit and learn from.

Appendix

Quizzes

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdKWogT84oisVC3Yb66Vdhta6kCcf_6kXnxjKU7oY8BYmlk7A/viewform

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdWx3N-IGWTAsiJxXPFxWYCQCvGdyxsUFyx_aNoPSABGuo4tw/viewform

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScXWAmO5BRevGULTTZk49pnK4YnUOPc71PhvLEWjL3P6CrYsQ/viewform>

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeoTKFZFe681fzNvU0dfdJ-LJe447dXBJNGG9MhL_i5JQohWA/viewform

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSecEETEEZxpYPoelezewGp_CsBynFr-BD7-SioG1fDDvxiimQ/viewform

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSej8Mpa31RGlj-t3Co0p83lwRII4plNkUZsspGiOf6lhVYafA/viewform>

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScC4y9zOuNcdtG-tdWKyR3L8MPzbeN39FJs85h_eWKdHFzqkA/viewform

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfvA7BK4N0ldZ5Gm-nRYccsk2nSdyPPHyklcFYskwwTakt63Q/viewform>

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScglk4U5crJ08wGeRiSt23QdCoff7WLU-mn3YKF2dMWwGRn_A/viewform

<https://create.kahoot.it/details/0ec61e36-129f-49ce-8970-1eb5ba49ab6a>

Asynchronous Projects

Lesson observation – <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gtetMC2Ud1C7esK5qLdW13x5n8YR1VRg/view?usp=sharing>

Design a lesson -https://drive.google.com/file/d/11ro4VbUyubV1HJHNjATNIFF_XnctZRDM/view?usp=sharing

Feedback Forms

Mid-Course Feedback

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSflcN4ynMhXDCDNVF5PDU84Db8LLbhN9nU4zwBkUY04U55DQw/viewform>

End-of-course feedback

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScog-SI-DGtAjWPYsdjSljD-tUzMA4W8ShZBja0w6QH9x17Q/viewform>

Feedback responses

What is the most important thing you have learnt on this course?

I try to speak English in the class.

The best thing for is how to teach writing because it is very difficult to teach writing and I can get new way new idea to teach my students.

The most important thing form learning the course is that how to ask the student by using CCQ, accuracy, fluency, game, reading and speaking. All of these are my favourite things that I have learnt from this course. I apply these to my class. The student like it because I have a new thing to learn for them.

How to teach English with fun and happy.

Practising my English.

The most important thing for me is the methods how I apply for my teaching with my students.

Grammar and writing is the most important I have learnt on this course.

The teaching methods in each lesson.

I think the using in English with other people, to know the teachers from other school. Speaking with the teacher, Luiza that help me about the listening English. Changing the idea.

I have known the methods, stages of teaching and I have learnt how to teach my students clear and fun when they study English. This course made me more confident and gave me a lot of ways to create various activities to present my students.

Many ideals and a lot of technics in teaching.

I have learnt the techniques about how to make the English class more fun.

CCQS

Useful techniques of teaching English and how to get students' interests to the topics.

The most important thing is learning with the native speaker.

Practising my English.

How to teach the students. I know about how to plan to teach my students in many skills with various the sessions.

The techniques for teaching language skills and functions.

The most important thing that I have learnt on this course are improving my English and making friends with the teachers around Thailand. And, moreover, I glad to learn four skills from the professional speakers.

Method for teaching my students.

Speaking

Teaching skills are helpful for me to teach students.

If we start the lesson with a good warmer our class is better and more interesting.

I learn a lot of technic teaching and a lot of activities.

I have learnt about speaking.

I can learn about many skills of teaching

More confident to use English.
How to teach listening because I don't have more time to prepare my lessons plan and to search my listening lesson.
I will apply everything that I have learn from this course to my classroom. I will make the lesson plan and get the materials that I've got from each week I have learnt. I will use Zoom program to teach my student and get them to join the programme. Once I used computer game for teaching young learner they liked it.
The strategy of teaching I do that differently after the course.
Speaking confidently
I know the process how I teach my students.
None.
The grammar lessons
To answer the questions which have to write. To do Lesson plan because I don't have more time to do.
I will think and create my lesson to my students fun and don't make them afraid of mistaking in using English.
Make the learners more interest in the lesson and in my class.
Use CCQs in the class
Lesson plan
Try to use CCQs more in the classroom.
Use more English with students in the class.
Speaking confidently
I can design my lesson which I can use the materials in the internet.
Teaching listening and grammar. Honestly, before this course, I taught grammar by giving handout and exercises to my students. And for listening class, I let my students to listen to CD and then answer the questions.
New style of my teaching
Improve teaching.
Design the lessons for my students
Wait for next course.
I won't ask 'Do you understand?' to my students.
I can improve my teaching and make me more confident.
I feel more confident speaking.
I will make a good lesson plan and prepare material for my class.

Extra sessions/materials

Q&A (one burning question)

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1zpGOP6-VMMAIRX91NhqJOg3JTyasdYAYJkD9WqRcP_M/edit?usp=sharing

A selection of communicative and engaging materials to try with your students (supplied as PDF to all CPs post-course)

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/17afLTvllwAhA6P0ufOsAZe1R6df3uACd3jg_ZrQ0_XU/edit?usp=sharing

Vietnam

Project background

Partners

The Partners for this project were Wimbledon School of English (WSE) and the Vietnam Association for English Language Teaching and Research (VietTESOL Association).

WSE is an independently owned language school based in south-west London with a peak capacity of approximately 400 full-time students.

Academic Staff consists of 16 to 28 teachers (depending on the time of year) and three to five Academic Managers. There are (at peak) 20 non-academic administration staff.

Multiple general and specialist courses, including a range of teacher training courses, are offered in-school, online and hybrid. Non-timetabled ESP courses are available on demand.

VietTESOL Association is a non-profit socio-professional organisation aimed to create a trusted platform for those who are interested in, and committed to, English language teaching and research. VietTESOL is headquartered in Hanoi, Vietnam.

CPs were selected according to requirements – CPD opportunities in Vietnam tend to be restricted to major towns and cities, so priority was given to applicants who lived away from such places, and as a result had very limited CPD.

In the needs analysis process, it was established that all CPs had access to reliable or mostly reliable internet access.

All CPs were in work, and this influenced the timings of the live delivery sessions.

Key features of the context

36 course participants (CPs)

Primary school teachers: 21	Lower secondary school teachers: 16 (one CP taught both)
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Male: 8	Female: 28
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Aged under 40 years: 24	Aged 40 years and over: 8	Age not given: 4
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English language CEFR level:	A2–B1: 12	B2: 17	C1–C2: 7
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Outline of the course and rationale

The rationale of the course was to improve the confidence of teachers by providing a solid basis on which to build and develop.

Content:

- Grammar and vocabulary revision and development
- Skills development: Reading, writing, listening and speaking
- 21st century soft skills

Format:

- Modular – each module provided two hours of synchronous study, to be done one evening per week for six weeks, in groups of between 12 and 17 participants
- Asynchronous study – blended projects, completed at times convenient to the students themselves. These projects took between two and five hours to complete, and involved research into an area directly connected to the week's topic, or diverted from the topic area to fit a particular area of interest. CPs received guidance, advice, and feedback from the trainer.

Platforms:

- Zoom for synchronous sessions
- Edmodo for correspondence between CPs, and between CPs and trainers

On completion of each module, CPs were invited to reflect on what they studied, not only in terms of how much they learned, but also with a focus on how the information was presented to them by the trainer. This encouraged them to analyse their own teaching styles and to consider how it may be adapted in the future. As part of this, CPs discussed with the trainer the rationale behind the approach used at each stage, allowing CPs to share knowledge with other members of the ETA who did not attend the course. This was formalised by the introduction of a buddy system.

The course was designed to be adaptable to reflect the needs of CPs at different levels of English ability, from A1 to C2, as required, and to allow for additional content, depending on the requirements. See Appendix 1 for course outline.

Project findings

Working in partnership

Contact between WSE and VietTESOL was established by the British Council, and initial contact took place between the partners by email and then over Zoom. Key participants in the meetings were Jo Kroussaniotakis and Julian Oakley of WSE (with the Principal, Fiona Dunlop, present in the first meeting), and Dr Trinh Ngoc Anh and Nguyen Tam Trang of VietTESOL. Follow-up meetings involved at least one member from WSE and one from VietTESOL. The majority of information sharing was done via email.

Expectations were agreed very quickly in terms of the aims of the course (as prescribed by the British Council) and, in turn, the VietTESOL team made the course aims clear to CP applicants. Clear guidelines regarding roles were established: WSE would provide a course outline, and VietTESOL would advise WSE on the relevance of certain aspects of the course as more information about CPs came in. VietTESOL was also responsible for CP recruitment, which involved advertising, vetting applicants and selecting a cohort of CPs deemed best suited to the proposed course. Both parties would be involved in direct contact with CPs as appropriate. Speed of communication was sometimes a challenge, as WSE required information from VietTESOL, and VietTESOL required information from applicant CPs in order to collocate and present the information needed; much of the planning was taking place over the Christmas and New Year period, which also slowed the flow of information. However, the only real effect of this particular challenge was that the course itself started one week later than planned, and this was not disadvantageous to the quality of the course.

This process meant that the course had various iterations before the final version seen in the section above, and without the direct input of VietTESOL, who better understood the requirements of the CPs, it would have looked very different. For example, the initial proposal was a ten-week course, which on consultation was reduced first to eight and then to six weeks. It was clear that the course needed a structure, but the expectations of CPs would change over the weeks, and so adaptability had to be built in; there was room for flipped learning, but when the course was ongoing this was found not to be taken up by the CPs. This adaptability was enabled by the key participation of Duncan MacInnes (WSE Academic Projects Manager) in the later stages of course design; as an experienced teacher trainer, and one of the trainers who would be delivering the course, he had a clear understanding of what the course was intended to achieve.

Working within the CoP

PRELIM offered WSE the opportunity to work alongside other providers all tasked with providing similar courses, although in very different contexts. It was clear that some providers faced different challenges from others, whether in terms of managing expectations, speed of information, technical issues, partner support or CP numbers. It was very useful to have access to advice from NILE, as well as the opportunity to compare notes with other providers. Sometimes it was simple reassurance as regards timeframes which was valuable, other times it was direct advice from a provider in a similar situation, or as simple as sharing a document template. From a tech standpoint, learning to use a new communication platform, even one as simple as Slack, gave us a reminder of potential difficulties which could be faced by CPs unused to working with Zoom and Edmodo.

Working with the CPs

CPs were introduced to WSE by VietTESOL, and the first contact involved CPs sending needs analysis forms and completing a grammar/vocabulary level test. This was followed up by two Zoom meetings, the intention of which was threefold:

- Test individual CPs' technology and guide through use of Zoom if necessary
- Welcome CPs to the course and go over guidelines
- Test CPs' speaking level by means of a short conversation with a WSE trainer

Once this procedure was completed, all contact with the CPs (until the leaving ceremony after the course) was with their trainers, whose comments informed the following:

There was quite a range of levels and confidence within the three groups, even though they were grouped according to level. It took a couple of sessions before most CPs became familiar and comfortable with the format, but once they were the sessions ran very smoothly. The only issue that caused problems throughout was internet connectivity, which resulted in CPs dropping out and having to be readmitted to the Zoom meeting. It is also clear that Zoom etiquette is an essential pre-course requirement, as there were issues in this area.

Although there was some level of engagement between the CPs on Edmodo, I feel there could have been more. Despite encouraging them to do so and making it part of their out-of-class activities, there was less participant-to-participant engagement than was hoped, as they tended to submit assignments for trainers' comment. This is an area we should think about how we could improve in any similar future course.

Expectations had to be accounted for – we knew that the original aim of the course was not to train CPs in methodology, but some CPs made it very clear, halfway through the course, that methodology was what they wanted. In this case it was necessary to change the focus of the course slightly and provide the CPs with what they wanted, as it was felt that giving them instruction in methodology would in turn increase their confidence, thus keeping with the original aim of the course.

Attendance proved to be a problem for some, and it certainly fell off slightly during the course. If the course had had a small fee, or some other incentive, attached, this might not have happened.

After the course had finished, value was added by inviting CPs, partners and trainers to an online leaving ceremony, attended by WSE's Senior Management, and a representative of the British Council. During this ceremony CPs were given, and took, the opportunity to discuss the course and in many cases express thanks to their trainers.

Designing/delivering the course

As we were requested to provide a course to help the course participants with their overall confidence in using English, this became the primary aim, along with some specific pronunciation work. In this, the design was helped enormously by the fact that one of the trainers involved in the course design had experience of living and working in Vietnam. Topics and functions were chosen in the hope that they would be both engaging for the course participants and useful, as some of the language functions chosen could also be used by them in their own teaching, e.g. giving clear instructions, or talking about what is or isn't acceptable behaviour. The course participants seem to engage most with more cultural topics, especially when asked to describe what people generally do during the Tet holiday. Mid-course feedback (discussed in Course Outcomes, below) was also valuable in that the trainers were able to adjust content where necessary.



Figure 1: Screenshot of the PRELIM leaving ceremony held on 8th April 2021.

Course outcomes

All CPs (although it has to be said more from Group 3, which comprised those CPs whose CEFR was higher than the other two groups) said they felt more confident in using English by the end of the course, had gained some insights into marking written assignments and got some ideas for slide preparation. In fact, some of them started presenting their written assignments as slide presentations, which shows not only confidence in the language, but also with technology. Feedback was taken both mid-course and at course completion; a selection of anonymised comments can be seen in Appendix 2.

Subjective confidence levels:

Course participants were asked, pre-course, to rate their confidence, on a scale of 1 (very unconfident) to 5 (very confident) in the following areas: pronunciation, spoken fluency, grammar/vocabulary, listening, reading. Not all the CPs gave the information, but the overall average rating was 2.97. On completion, the same question was asked. Again, not all CPs responded, but the overall rating had risen to 3.86.

Key learning points

Working in partnership

The key points here are:

- Creating a timetable with roles and responsibilities is important, but there needs to be room for movement
- Course providers need to be aware that partners may not be able to commit as much time to the project as would be ideal
- Flexibility at all stages of the process is essential

Working within the CoP

This was a new experience for WSE and the CoP was a valuable resource. Future project managers should take as much advantage of shared knowledge as possible.

Working with the CPs

This was an area where learning points were not so unique to PRELIM – any group of trainees can be easy or challenging to work with. Key points are:

- Aims must be made clear at the beginning of the course
- Trainers must be aware of difficulty accessing sessions (due to technical problems and work obligations)
- Zoom training – both for efficient operation and good etiquette
- Edmodo training – to encourage increased use

Designing/delivering the course

All courses need a degree of flexibility; in this instance the key learning points are:

- The course needed dramatic reduction in response to CPs' availability
- Involving the trainers in the design of the course at the earliest opportunity proved essential
- A trainer's experience of working in the partner country greatly assisted in the understanding of CPs' requirements
- Using highly experienced trainers allowed for greater flexibility

Flexibility in the course must be built-in – if expectations are not being met adjustments have to be made quickly, as was done in this instance. Having experienced, skilled trainers delivering the course meant that this was possible.

Course outcomes

Course outcomes mostly reflected expectations of CPs and, to a certain extent, the course provider; it was obviously gratifying to see the positive feedback given by the CPs. Holding an online ceremony should be encouraged for any future project, as it was very much appreciated by all the CPs who attended. It also provides a sense of completion of the course, something which can be lacking in online courses.

One challenge which was difficult to overcome was that of attendance – the fall-off throughout the course was not dramatic, but one possible reason for it was the fact that the course was delivered free of charge to the CPs. It is understood that full course fees for this type of course will be beyond the financial capabilities of potential CPs in many countries, but if the course was subsidised by the British Council, even by as much as 90 per cent, instead of being entirely funded by them, then CPs would have more of a stake in the course and therefore be more likely to attend.

Region-specific recommendations

Based on our experience of running this course, recommendations for future potential courses in Vietnam are:

- Teaching with technology – bespoke for teachers who may be in more remote areas with variable internet accessibility, including using different platforms, troubleshooting, etc.
- Teaching methodology – this is a request made by many CPs during the course
- Train the trainer – giving existing teachers the confidence to pass on information learned on previous courses
- CLIL – all our CPs were primary or secondary school teachers, mostly teachers of English, but other subjects were also covered, so CLIL would be a valuable additional course

Appendix 1

Session	Objectives	Content
1	<p>What do you think?</p> <p>By the end of this session, trainees will have been exposed to a range of natural language to express and ask for opinions and will have had practice expressing their own opinions on a selection of topics, using a range of adjectives and expressions. They will be asked to notice the intonation patterns in a selection of questions to ask for opinions and to be able to notice the difference in intonation patterns between strong opinions and more hesitant opinions. They will also have practice in producing these intonation patterns and should feel more confident in expressing their own opinions in a clear and effective way.</p>	<p>Speaking: Asking for and expressing opinions.</p> <p>Reading/Listening: Short texts expressing opinions on a range of topics.</p> <p>Vocabulary: Adjectives to describe attitude (e.g. wonderful, fantastic, rubbish, awful, etc)</p> <p>Writing: Produce a questionnaire to share with fellow trainees.</p> <p>Functions: Asking for clarification/elaboration.</p> <p>Pronunciation: Intonation in questions, strong opinions, tentative opinions). Final /d/and /t/, particularly in past simple endings.</p> <p>Grammar: Review, where needed, of present and past simple question forms</p> <p>Blended element: Trainees produce a short questionnaire, which they share with their colleagues, and answer at least two questionnaires shared with them.</p>

Session	Objectives	Content
2	Something's happened	
	<p>By the end of this session, trainees will have been exposed to a range of people describing a problem and some examples of solutions. They will have also described some problems of their own (real or imagined) and have given advice/potential solutions to other trainees' problems. Trainees will be encouraged to use the present perfect when describing their problems, e.g. I've lost my phone, My car has broken down, paying particular attention to weak syllables and practising producing the lax phonemes /ə/and / /. </p>	<p>Speaking: Reporting problems (and their causes) and offering potential solutions. Reading/Listening: Short accounts of problems.</p> <p>Vocabulary: words and phrases connected with describing problems/difficult situations.</p> <p>Writing: Write about a minor problem giving some background information. Respond to problems with advice/potential solutions.</p> <p>Functions: Giving advice, making suggestions.</p> <p>Pronunciation: Weak syllables and weak phonemes /ə/and / /.</p> <p>Grammar: Review, where needed, present perfect simple and modals used for giving suggestions.</p> <p>Blended element: Post a problem as if it were on a social media site. Respond to other trainees' problems.</p>

Session	Objectives	Content
3	This time next year...	
	<p>By the end of this session, trainees will have been exposed to a number of examples of people's hopes and expectations and will have practised talking about their own using a range of structures including <i>I think I'll (be) VERB(ing), I expect/hope to, I expect hope he/she/they will...</i> In doing so they will pay attention to the use of /ə/in to and the contracted form of will as well as stress to show confident predictions, e.g. I definitely WILL pass the exam.</p>	<p>Speaking: Discussing personal expectations, hope, wishes.</p> <p>Reading/Listening: Short texts on people's expectations, predictions for the future.</p> <p>Vocabulary: verbs used to express hopes, predictions, expectations.</p> <p>Writing: A description of plans for a group of overseas visitors to your institution and city.</p> <p>Functions: Expressing hopes, expectations, and predictions. Asking other people what they hope, expect or predict.</p> <p>Pronunciation: Further practice of /ə/, and 'll as a contraction of will. Stress for emphasis.</p> <p>Grammar: Review, where needed, of will for predictions, hope to for hopes, Blended element: Post the description, read and comment on other trainees' descriptions.</p>

Session	Objectives	Content
4	If you push the button the light comes on	
	<p>By the end of this session trainees will have been exposed to a number of examples of instructions on how to perform an action and will have practised giving their own instructions, using clear stage markers. They will have been exposed to a range of verbs to help them give accurate instructions.</p> <p>After this session trainees should feel more confident in giving instructions in English to set up classroom activities.</p>	<p>Speaking: Giving instructions on how to perform a task.</p> <p>Reading/Listening: Text explaining how to carry out an action. Trainees read/listen and perform the action based on their understanding of the text.</p> <p>Vocabulary: appropriate verbs, e.g. push, pull, turn, switch on/off, rotate, twist, etc. and adverbs, depending on the task. Sequencing words, e.g. first(ly), then, next, meanwhile, finally, etc.</p> <p>Writing: A guide on how to perform a task.</p> <p>Functions: Describing how to do something. Sequencing stages.</p> <p>Pronunciation: Pausing.</p> <p>Grammar: Review, were needed, of the zero conditional</p> <p>Blended element: Post a guide on how to perform a task. Read and comment on other trainees' guides.</p>

Session	Objectives	Content
5	Same, same, but different.	
	<p>By the end of this session trainees will have been exposed to some information about a cultural aspect of a number of different countries and will have discussed the similarities and differences between them, using comparative adjectives and linking expressions to show contrast. They will also have collaborated on a short presentation to present some information on a cultural aspect of Vietnam.</p>	<p>Speaking: Discussions to find similarities and differences between people, places.</p> <p>Reading: Short texts on a cultural aspect of a country (perhaps New Year celebrations). Trainees then compare what they've learned.</p> <p>Vocabulary: Expressions to describe tendencies (e.g. tend to, as a rule, on the whole.), linking expressions to show contrast.</p> <p>Writing: Short piece of writing comparing New Year celebrations in Vietnam to those in another country.</p> <p>Functions: Comparing and contrasting.</p> <p>Pronunciation: focus on final consonant sounds.</p> <p>Grammar: Review, where needed, of comparative adjectives and other structures to show contrast.</p> <p>Blended element: Post a guide for visitors to Vietnam/CP's town.</p>

Session	Objectives	Content
6	<p>That's not on here.</p> <p>By the end of this lesson trainees will have been exposed to a number of laws and cultural aspects of some countries and expressed what is and is not acceptable from a cultural point of view in Vietnam and in the workplace. This will build their confidence in discussing school and classroom rules in English with their students.</p>	<p>Speaking: Explaining social etiquette, cultural norms to a visitor to Vietnam. Explaining the culture of your workplace.</p> <p>Reading/Listening: Short text on laws/customs in a few select countries.</p> <p>Vocabulary: adjectives to describe what is and is not allowed (e.g. (un)acceptable, prohibited, (not) advised, etc)</p> <p>Writing: An email/message to a colleague/friend explaining why their recent behaviour was unacceptable.</p> <p>Functions: Outlining acceptable/unacceptable behaviour.</p> <p>Pronunciation:</p> <p>Grammar: Review, where necessary, of modals of obligation, permission (must, can't, have to, don't have to, may).</p> <p>Blended element: Reflect on the course.</p>

Appendix 2: Feedback comments

Mid-course:

- I really appreciate trainers' enthusiasm. The trainers are so helpful. They choose the suitable topics for us to discuss, and give us chances to practise speaking as much as possible.
- First of all, I would like to thank for this course, native teachers, support teachers, facilitators. Through this course I can improve my English skills, I can find useful information, I can make friends who have the same idea, target in our job. Finally, I wish this course development, success.
- I like the way the teachers design learning activities and leave us time to discuss among ourselves. If possible, I hope the trainers can show us more ways to design activities, gaming activities to make the lesson more engaging when teaching grammar or vocab so that we can apply in our own teaching. Thank you very much.
- That's would be great if HW can be checked by teachers (comment on Edmodo).
- When practising in breakout room, can teacher join longer and also give feedback on some common mistakes we make.
- I would like to learn more about teaching method for young learner.
- The course gives me a chance to interact with others in English. I would like to have a longer course like that. Thank you so much.

End of course:

- I love joining this kind of English course, because I can directly (face-to-face) connect with a native teacher. Thanks to taking part in this course, I can learn many methods of teaching which our teachers run the classes. Only one thing which I concern is that the course last only one month, I have just come up with, it finished. We need some more exams to improve our skills.
- It brings more chance for me to practise speaking English. Moreover, the teacher gave useful phrases to use in different situation, the teacher also spent a lot his time to correct our writing. I really appreciate it. Beside that all the writings from other student, I can read and pick up some good ideas or I can also figure out some mistakes from that. It's a process of learning.
- The most useful thing of this course is that the students have a chance to practise English speaking in group and receive teacher's feedback immediately.
- The least useful thing is the time, which is too short.
- Many big thank to PRELIM PROJECT, handsome and enthusiastic teacher Duncan MacInnes to give me the course and the lessons. I found it very useful for my teaching, speaking and listening skills. I feel much more confident to speak English though my English isn't good enough. But the most useful thing I have learned from the course is the patience of Mr Duncan MacInnes and the way he led us to each lesson.
- I was very lucky to be in the class and it helped me much, especially the last session of Teaching Writing.
- It covered everything I was expecting.

Palestine

Project background

1. Description of the partners

Course Provider: Peartree Languages

Lead Consultant: Everton Machado,
Academic Manager

Peartree Languages is a small-sized private language academy in Cardiff, South Wales, established in 2005 by its owner and Centre Manager, Nicky Partridge, accredited by the British Council since 2014. Before 2020, courses focussed on face-to-face delivery of EFL lessons to both adults and junior international learners in groups or privately. During the summer, a project-based junior vacation course is offered which lasts between four and six weeks, attending to hundreds of international learners and leading to a significant increase in the number of students and staff employed.

Peartree had already been delivering bespoke one-to-one online lessons since 2010, mainly on Skype. However, due to the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the school had to quickly embrace the online environment, moving its existing face-to-face lessons online and devising new strategies to increase its online presence, keep its learning community engaged and deliver new courses.

English Teachers' Association (ETA): The Palestinian Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language

Contact: Ms Rida Thabet

The Palestinian Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (PATEFL) is a non-profit organisation established in 2017 and based in Gaza, Palestine. As stated in their PRELIM application form, it aims to *'promote professional excellence among English language teachers in all possible ways by engaging them in active professional learning communities where they meet, share ideas, and collaborate through various activities such as CPD courses, conferences and research'*.

The ETA is an IATEFL associate, which is supported and recognised by the Palestinian Ministry of Education and UNRWA (The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) for its contribution to teachers' professional development.

At the end of 2020, the ETA had 320 active members, attending to 1,260 non-member teachers. It promotes teacher interaction online mainly through its public Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/156197438167251/>) and a more recent Facebook like page (<https://www.facebook.com/PATEFL>).

PRELIM was the first formal project of the ETA, which is growing, and encouraging the Palestinian TEFL community to become members.

2. Key features of the context

a. Number of course participants

A total of 239 Palestinian teachers filled in the needs analysis questionnaire shared by PATEFL, in three stages. 94 of the respondents did not reply to any initial contact. The 145 remaining participants were then divided into three different cohorts according to their availability, self-assessed levels, and after sending an oral and written language assessment.

Cohort 1:	Cohort 2:	Cohort 3:
57 participants enrolled	44 participants enrolled	44 participants enrolled
Attendees: 40 Certificates issued: 30	Attendees: 29 Certificates issued: 19	Attendees: 27 Certificates issued: 22
Levels: A2-B1+ (Primary) 4 groups – 2 Peartree tutors	Level: B2 (Secondary) 4 groups – 1 Peartree tutor	Level: C1 (Secondary) 2 groups – 1 Peartree tutor
Group names: Daffodil, Harp, Dragon, Castle	Group names: Taff, Snowdon, Brecon, Cardiff	Group names: Dylan, Puffin Contact hours: 6.25
Contact hours: 16.5 (1.5 hours over 11 weeks)	Contact hours: 7.5 (1.5 hours over 5 weeks)	Induction dates: 04/01/2021 08/02/2021
Induction date: 06/01/2021	Induction dates: 05/01/2021 09/02/2021	Course dates: 11/01–08/02/2021 15/02–15/03/2021
Course dates: 12/01 –23/03/2021 14/01–25/03/2021	Course dates: 12/01–09/02/2021 14/01–11/02/2021 16/02–16/03/2021 18/02–18/03/2021	Certificate requirements: * Same as cohort 1 (except for item 3: Project presentation)
Certificate requirements: * 80 per cent attendance of live sessions (or accessing recorded sessions and completing a self-reflection task in case of technical issues) * Sending self-reflections to tutors after each session by email or on Padlet (originally 80 per cent of the sessions; however, this was later negotiated) * Developing and delivering a presentation of an autonomous project in the last session	Certificate requirements: * Same as cohort 1	

49 of CPs initially enrolled did not attend either the induction or the first sessions, and were later removed from the course after not replying to communication attempts from both the course provider and ETA.

Out of the 96 who attended the course, 71 received course certificates, which indicates a dropout rate of 26 per cent (16 CPs only attended initial sessions, while nine attended most sessions but did not complete the course requirements).

All attendees that missed sessions were contacted and given access to recordings; however, the few who replied could not continue the course for different personal reasons.

b. Course demographics:

Gender:

Initial cohorts

Male: 31 (21.4 per cent)

Female: 114 (78.6 per cent)

Attendees

Male: 14 (14.6 per cent)

Female: 82 (85.4 per cent)

Region distribution:

Gaza: 83.4 per cent

Jerusalem and the West Bank: 14.5 per cent

Online platforms:

CPs were mainly familiar with:

Zoom: 130 (89 per cent)

WhatsApp: 132 (91 per cent)

Internet accessibility:

Over 85 per cent of CPs initially reported no internet connection issues, with over 70 per cent saying they could access the synchronous sessions on laptops.

Most CPs, however, accessed sessions on their mobiles.

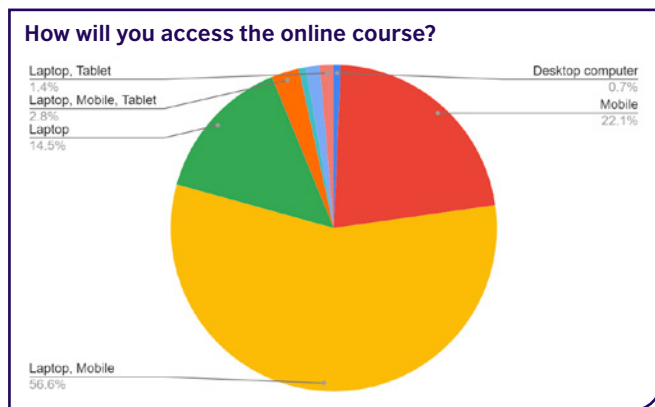


Figure 1: Chart: How CPs plan to access the online sessions.

3. Outline of the course and rationale

Platform choice

Given the familiarity of most CPs with the Zoom platform and no major connectivity issues initially flagged (despite the ETA pointing out that electricity cuts could cause some minor issues), it was decided that Zoom would be used for synchronous sessions.

For asynchronous material, Padlet was chosen due to its functionalities and to introduce it as a new tool for CPs to use with their own learners. WhatsApp was used as an alternative communication tool through the Peartree mobile only, for data privacy reasons.

Course rationale

The needs analysis indicated the two main areas CPs felt less confident to teach were: writing (62 per cent) and speaking (52 per cent). The aspects of speaking mostly mentioned were fluency, spontaneous conversation, interaction with native speakers, intonation and pronunciation.

In addition, CPs suggested different themes, which ranged from teaching strategies and activities to techniques on how to improve their own speaking skills discussing social and cultural topics.

Although not the primary focus of the project, the interest in including aspects of teaching methodology was discussed with the ETA and, taking into consideration the new online challenges faced by participants, it was agreed that this should also be included. Course elements could also be negotiated with CPs as the course progressed.

A self-reflection assignment was devised to attend to the writing issues additionally identified. Tutors would then encourage peer feedback and send CPs individual feedback on points to consider, such as language and self-reflection skills.

Cohorts 1 and 2 also had to develop an autonomous project of their choice to be presented to their colleagues during the last session of their courses. CPs received a final feedback report from their tutors based on their participation and performance during the course, their accomplished tasks, and identified areas for improvement (see final report example in Appendix 2).

All participants were invited to join the free weekly webinars provided by Peartree Languages, giving them an opportunity to develop their language skills and access different online activities, further promoting a Welsh-Palestinian cultural exchange.

Project findings

1. Working in partnership

Managing expectations

PATEFL initially pointed out that, due to the pandemic, CPs would need to become familiar with online resources and activities, necessitating a focus on methodology. Given the project aims to develop their confidence and skills to operate in English in the classroom, the negotiated approach was to provide CPs with the opportunity to develop their productive skills on a range of topics (elicited from their needs analysis) while exposing them to varied teaching methodologies and styles, encouraging self-reflection on strategies that could be trialled with their learners.

In PATEFL's words, during our last meeting of the PRELIM course:

It was the first course tailored for the teachers' needs, covering a neglected area. Teachers are not learning about the language, but by using the language ... enabling them to address the communicative part of the Palestinian curriculum.

PATEFL findings

Weekly meetings with our partners discussed the different stages of the course, CPs' engagement, feedback and future ideas for cooperation. Being the first major project for PATEFL, it was also pointed out how the organisation of the course provider (enrolment, handling database, communication with CPs) provided them with a good model to be followed.

At the end of the course, PATEFL were made administrators of the closed PRELIM Facebook group, allowing them to work with more engaged participants and keeping a collaborative channel open with the course provider. Peartree also provided support on the creation of the PATEFL's Padlet page, which has been used to share course information, design competitions and activities to keep CPs engaged.

Learning points:

- The ETA's engagement helped us better understand the local context and needs, and was key to enhancing CPs' participation throughout the course
- Managing the ETA's initial expectations was a guarantee to better achieving the course primary aims

2. Working within the CoP

As a high number of B2–C1 CPs were initially interested in the course, it was agreed by both Peartree and PATEFL not to turn them away. By observing and engaging in different discussions with the CoP, it was realised that there was room to focus on lower-level speakers by providing them with a longer and more thorough course, and still attend to higher-level CPs by creating shorter courses in different cohorts.

The CoP meetings also helped Peartree to find solutions to technical issues, such as how to make recordings available and control CPs' access to them asynchronously. The solution, although time consuming, was effective: upload the recordings as private YouTube videos, shared with CPs' email addresses, and ask them to complete an extra task for attendance. This was useful as, despite technical/personal issues, CPs still managed to access the course content.

Learning point:

- Despite the different contexts from each PRELIM course, different perspectives are invaluable when approaching course design

3. Working with the CPs

CPs' email addresses were collected on the initial Google Form; however, after follow-up contact to confirm teaching status, it was noticed that nearly half of the submissions did not reply to their emails. An extension of the application deadline, announced by PATEFL by contacting school supervisors, managed to bring in new participants, who were then asked for their WhatsApp contact and invited to join a closed Facebook group. Still, despite all the communication channels provided, there was a clear drop in numbers during the first few weeks. PATEFL sent reminders on Facebook and through school supervisors, which slightly increased the attendance in week three of the course. Direct and constant contact with CPs through these multiple communication channels proved to be successful to maintain engagement and attendance.

CP support throughout the course was provided through all these channels, the most successful being Facebook messenger and the closed group, which should lead us to consider how to promote such courses in the future.

Learning points:

- Ensure potential participants have access to varied ways to sign up to the course to increase overall project enrolment, potentially by including local school supervisors from the start
- Divide participants into different groups as per preferred communication channels
- Include multiple communication channels to increase participants' engagement and course attendance

4. Designing/delivering the course

Technical issues

Over 80 per cent of CPs indicated no technical connectivity issues; however, PATEFL flagged that Gaza suffers constant electricity cuts. This meant CPs would be disconnected once they lost energy and would have to switch on their generators to re-join the lessons. This was mainly an issue in one of the groups, as mentioned by their tutor in the feedback:

The biggest challenge was that of poor power supply and WiFi connection in Palestine, which meant that students often bounce in and out of lessons, were unable to use their cameras and could not receive files through the Zoom App as they were mostly using their phones rather than a laptop or PC ... However, the use of new technology and teaching platforms was also one of the successes of this course with participants embracing the use of many new applications, realising that a blended learning approach is the future of teaching.

Constant monitoring of communication channels by the Academic Manager, who acted as a cover teacher and was set as co-host for all Zoom sessions, was needed to ensure CPs could re-join the lessons after losing connection. While most CPs were on time for the sessions, this also required a flexible approach to punctuality. Finally, each session was recorded and made available to CPs absent due to technical issues, or on demand. CPs, with very few exceptions, proved to be resourceful and could handle connectivity issues quickly.

Another technical aspect discussed in the CoP and at teachers' meetings was the issue of CPs keeping their cameras switched off during synchronous meetings. It was later agreed that it could improve CPs' connection and many may have felt uncomfortable to have the camera on while being recorded. However, one of the tutors in Cohort 1 managed to reverse this trend with constant positive encouragement.

Learning points:

- Have someone available during synchronous sessions to handle technical issues and communicate with participants
- Have a flexible approach to technical issues that attend to participants' needs regarding technology available and connectivity problems
- Provide different opportunities to access content (such as making video recordings available for CPs to view in their own time)

CP engagement and PATEFL

PATEFL provided invaluable support by keeping CPs engaged online and encouraging attendance. PATEFL's constant participation in the Facebook group motivated CPs to leave comments and interact on posts more often. One point that was later identified, however, is that CPs often gave more recognition to the work of individuals than that of organisations (PATEFL, Peartree Languages), even though interaction came through institutional channels. This led us to consider ways of further highlighting the role of both organisations.

PATEFL could also collect initial feedback from CPs, identifying key areas to develop course delivery and consistency. Later feedback collected by Peartree, while being really positive, reflected that CPs were also comfortable to express any concerns and indicate areas to improve.

Learning points:

- Ensure the ETA is engaged in the communities of practice
- Identify ways to engage participants with stakeholder institutions as well as with individuals (e.g. introducing each session with a reminder that the course is provided in partnership with the ETA)
- Ensure CPs have an open communication channel with the ETA

I need to practice speaking more and more to become confident.
No, I don't have any idea at the moment.
I hope to focus more at our way of speaking as teacher because the most activities are about how to deal with student but my problem is correcting my mistakes of speaking to move from this level to c1 or c2.
Having channels to make contact between our students and native speakers students. Providing us with useful links of websites that helps our students to speak English very well, also need channels to connect our students with native speakers students.

Figure 2: CPs' initial comments on the course were discussed during the teachers' meetings and helped tutors to manage CPs' expectations and better focus on the aims.

The role of tutors

Initially, teachers had a pre-course meeting and attended their group inductions. Also, the course outline was shared with tutors, who were provided with a suggested lesson plan and resources on a weekly basis. During teachers' meetings, instead of following a fixed top-down agenda, teachers were asked open-ended questions to encourage them to reflect on weekly highlights, challenges, and for others to share ideas and solutions. A main finding here is the way teachers became more proactive – making suggestions and devising solutions that would benefit their learners more.

In their words:

The teacher meetings in particular were so valuable – Everton and the other teachers gave brilliant ideas, support and advice for dealing with student issues or content.

The weekly teachers meeting was invaluable to provide support to each other and to ensure that the course participants were receiving equivalent guidance.

Lessons focused more consistently on the aims and outcomes of the project, allowing tutors to negotiate the course outline and resources with CPs.

Learning points:

- Include teachers in the decision-making process by avoiding a top-down approach and turning meetings into communities of practice
- Sharing ideas and solutions horizontally helped to focus on course aims and build consistency

Self-reflections

Self-reflections proved to be useful for CPs to focus on the language learnt, their own struggles and their teaching approach, as seen in the following tutor feedback to a CP:

Your self-reflections have become more insightful over the last few weeks and it is clear that you care about creating an interesting and fun environment for your students, and carefully consider how activities could be adapted to suit their own needs. You have also recognised the importance of creating a community where students can encourage and support each other.

Constructive feedback also encouraged CPs to improve their writing skills and further develop self-reflection. Here is a reply from one of the CPs to individual feedback:

Thank you for the feedback! I think, as you said, that I have to include my students' reaction, my concerns about implementing different activities and how I can handle them in other situations. I am sure this will be more authentic and beneficial for me and for my future action plans. Thanks for your time and for everything you did in this exciting course.

Learning point:

- Ensure teachers provide feedback from the start, to engage CPs in developing their self-reflection skills

Padlet

This asynchronous tool provided a model for CPs to share resources and content with their learners as well as engage with their groups by sharing self-reflections, presenting project ideas and making comments. Even though some CPs were more engaged than others, it still provided them with a useful tool, which they started using in their classes. It also encouraged the ETA to create their own Padlet community of learning.

Learning point:

- Although CPs' engagement varied, Padlet was a useful tool to create smaller communities of practice among groups and to provide a model that could be easily reproduced in the classroom environment

5. Course outcomes

Outcomes for our school

Delivery of future projects

The PRELIM project has definitely ensured and enhanced Peartree Languages' confidence to run bigger projects and apply for future tenders by focusing on its expertise and forming multiple CoPs (with CPs, ETA, course providers, tutors and staff members). It means that a small-sized school can find opportunities to learn, reinvent itself and further develop, being productive and making positive changes in these uncertain times.

An everlasting partnership

The project also managed to consolidate the partnership between the ETA and Peartree Languages, now sharing a joint Facebook group. CPs and PATEFL members are still invited to participate in free online activities provided by our school and there have been discussions of ideas for future cooperation.

Outcomes for course participants

New attitudes to teaching

CPs gave feedback on how the course changed their attitude to teaching:

*A billion thanks for the chance to practice language in amazing way and share new ideas in teaching smoothly. Also, self-reflection is benefit for me and the constructive feedback who gives us. Practically, I learned how to create a comfortable environment to my students and I have used it in my classes.
ALL things are creative.*

CPs could also approach online teaching in a more engaging way:

I am so proud to say that this is my first school padlet.
 To be honest, I didn't know about this amazing and useful app until Peartree Languages offered it.
 Thank you so much ❤️

I am so proud that I had this experience and now I am using it with my astonishing girls at [redacted] prep school.
 Thanks so much to my girls for always being eager to learn new things and also to my school principal [redacted] and to her assistant Mrs [redacted] for their constant help and support.

Proud to be a part of this school. ❤️

You're invited to take a look about what students did only in one day. We're expecting more in the coming days xx

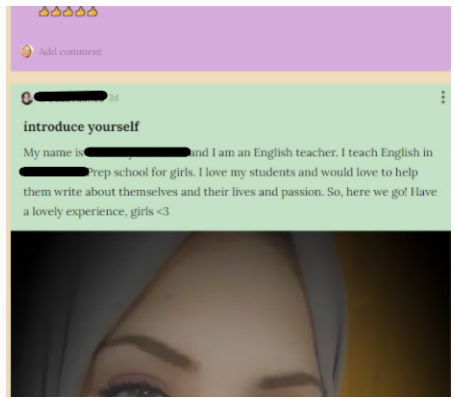


Figure 4: One of the CPs uses communicative ideas seen in the course with her own learners on Zoom (shared in the Facebook group).

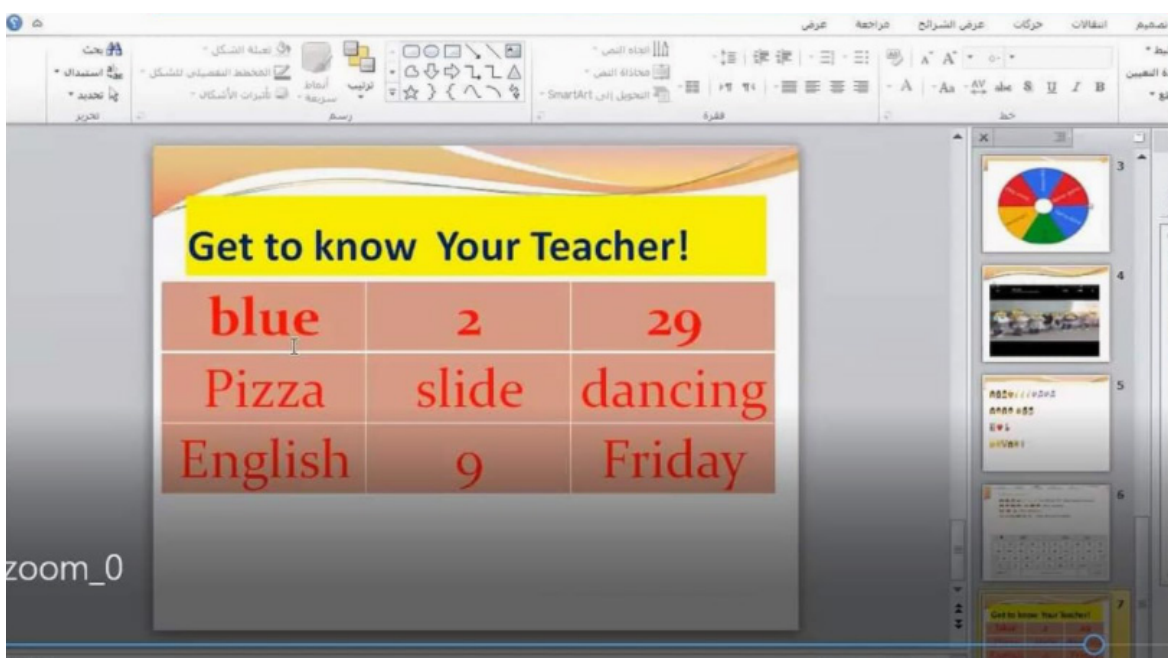


Figure 3: Padlet page created by one of the CPs after the course and shared in the Facebook group.

An increase in confidence

Having a learner-centred communicative approach focusing both on language skills and activities for the classroom meant that CPs feel more confident to operate in English.

According to one of the CPs: *'I am more confident to speak English, to express my thoughts and to give my students more language experience.'*

While in cohorts 2 and 3 there was a similar increase in CPs' perceived confidence, it is noticeable to observe the different results between the mid-course and the end-of-course

Outcomes for PATEFL

Transborder connections

During our closing ceremony, Ms Runna Badwan (British Council, Palestine) mentioned the importance of these projects in a segmented country such as Palestine. Many participants from Gaza expressed their pleasure in being able to contact their colleagues from the West Bank. PRELIM has provided the ETA, based in Gaza, with an opportunity to further expand and engage TEFL teachers all over Palestine.

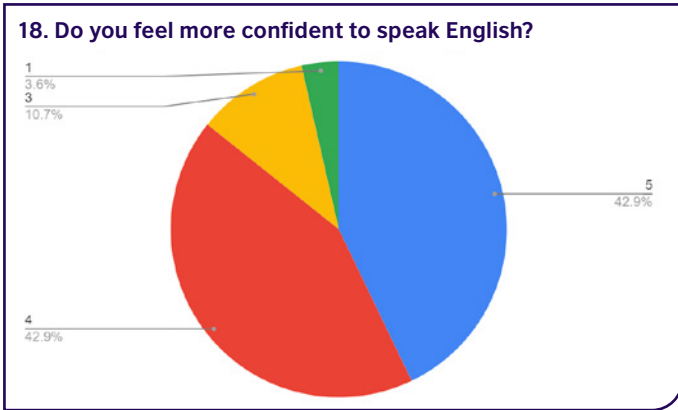


Figure 5: Chart: Mid-course questionnaire (Cohort 1)

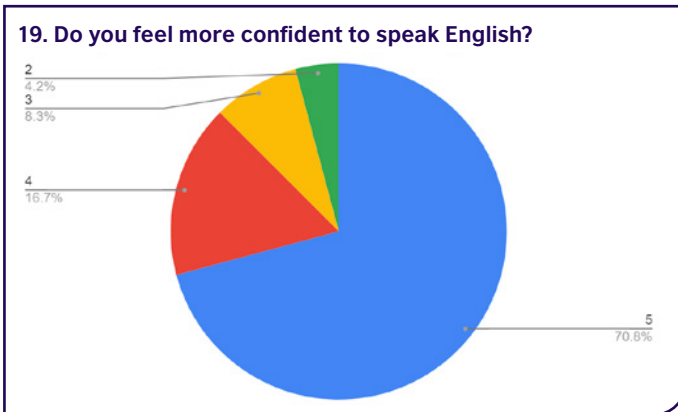


Figure 6: Chart: End-of-course questionnaire (Cohort 1)

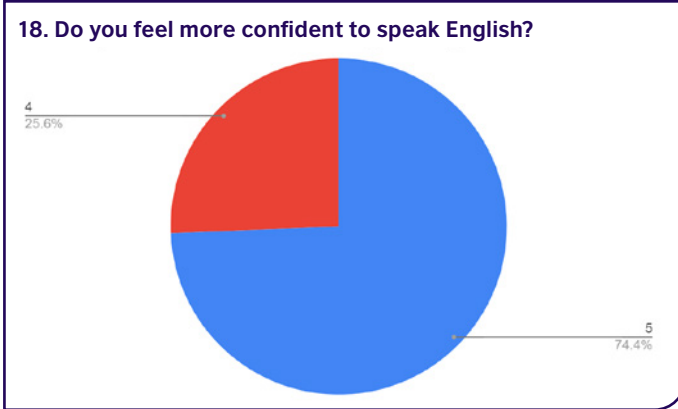


Figure 7: End-of-course questionnaire (Cohorts 2 and 3)

Developed expertise

The ETA has mentioned a development in their expertise to handle bigger projects (its promotional and organisational aspects and use of online resources). The digital communities developed intend to keep on engaging Palestinian teachers, developing their language skills in benefit of their classroom environments.

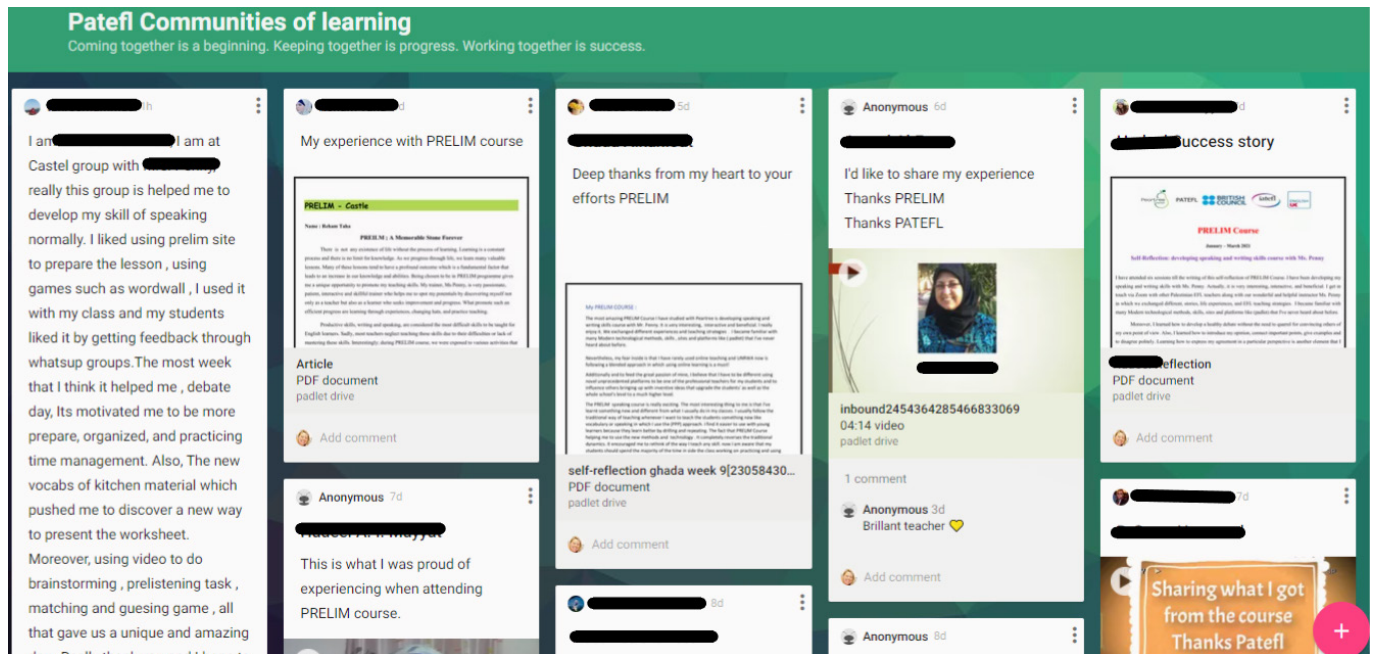


Figure 8: CPs share their PRELIM experience on PATEFL's Padlet Community of Learning.

Link: <https://padlet.com/pateflassociate/Bookmarks>

Key learning points

Summary reflection on the project areas to identify the key learning points for this type of project.

Learning points:

- The ETA's engagement helped us better understand the local context and needs, and was key to enhancing CPs' participation throughout the course
- Managing the ETA's initial expectations was a guarantee to better achieving the course primary aims
- Despite the different contexts from each PRELIM course, different perspectives are invaluable when approaching course design
- Ensure potential participants have access to varied ways to sign up to the course to increase overall project enrolment, potentially by including local school supervisors from the start
- Divide participants into different groups as per preferred communication channels
- Include multiple communication channels to increase participants' engagement and course attendance
- Have someone available during synchronous sessions to handle technical issues and communicate with participants
- Have a flexible approach to technical issues that attends to participants' needs, regarding technology available and connectivity problems
- Provide different opportunities to access content (such as making video recordings available for CPs to view in their own time)
- Ensure the ETA is engaged in the communities of practice
- Identify ways to engage participants with stakeholder institutions as well as with individuals (e.g. introducing each session with a reminder that the course is provided in partnership with the ETA)
- Ensure CPs have an open communication channel with the ETA
- Include teachers in the decision-making process by avoiding a top-down approach and turning meetings into communities of practice
- Sharing ideas and solutions horizontally helped to focus on course aims and build consistency
- Ensure teachers provide feedback from the start, to engage CPs in developing their self-reflection skills
- Although CPs' engagement varied, Padlet was a useful tool to create smaller communities of practice among groups and to provide a model that could be easily reproduced in the classroom environment

Appendix 1: Course Outline

Cohort 1 (Primary)

Groups: Daffodil and Dragon (Tuesdays), Harp and Castle (Thursdays).

3. Your course

12/01/21 / 14/01/21 - **Introductions**
Get to know your teacher and classmates
Focus: Icebreakers - Asking questions - Conversation starters

19/01/21 / 21/01/21 - **The Arts**
Discuss and make suggestions of your favourite films, books and works of art
Focus: Language for description / opinions / giving advice

26/01/21 / 28/01/21 - **Pronunciation Journey**
Production and perception of tricky English sounds in context
Focus: Phonetics / Phonology

02/02/21 / 04/02/21 - **Storytelling**
Talk about different experiences in life
Focus: connectives - asking/answering questions - paraphrasing - fluency

09/02/21 - 11/02/21 - **Education in different cultures**
Research and compare educational systems in different countries
Focus: Debating - agreeing/disagreeing - interrupting






Figure 9: Course outline presented during induction (Cohort 1)

Groups: Daffodil and Dragon (Tuesdays), Harp and Castle (Thursdays).

3. Your course

16/02/21 / 18/02/21 - **Getting into the rhythm of English**
Using poetry to practise suprasegmental features of the language
Focus: Intonation / rhythm / linking sounds / fluency

23/02/21 / 25/02/21 - **You set the task!**
Language specifically used in the classroom!
Focus: Giving clear instructions - Providing feedback - CCQs

02/03/21 / 04/03/21 - **Question and Answer session!**
This is your opportunity to work on questions and topics of your choice! Tell your teacher in advance!

09/03/21 / 11/03/21 - **The future**
Discuss changes over the last year and what the future holds for us
Focus: Problem-solving - interaction - predictions - modality

16/03/21 - 18/03/21 - **Public speaking**
Time to practise your presentation skills.
Focus: Useful language for giving presentations - fillers - providing feedback






Figure 10: Course outline presented during induction (Cohort 1)

Cohort 2 (Secondary)

Groups: Taff, Snowdon (B2- Cohort 1); Brecon, Cardiff (Cohort 2)

3. Your course

- 12 - 14/01/21 - Spontaneous conversation
Introductions - Asking questions - How to make small talk (openers/developers).
Focus: Small talk in the UK / Cultural differences / Conversation starters
- 19 - 21/01/21 - Pronunciation Journey for Arabic speakers
Production and perception of tricky English sounds
Focus: Phonetics / Phonology
- 26 - 28/01/21 - Education in different cultures
Comparing educational systems in different countries (UK and Palestine)
Focus: Real English to give and ask for opinions - debate - interrupt
- 02 - 04/02/21 - Solving future problems
Discuss and solve problems in group
Focus: 21st century skills - Problem solving - Decision making - Presentation skills
- 09 - 11/02/21 - Long turn speaking
5-minute presentation of personal project
Focus: Peer feedback - Fluency - Public speaking






Figure 11: Course outline presented during induction (Cohort 2: Groups Taff and Snowdon)

Cohort 3 (Secondary)

Groups: Dylan (C1- Cohort 1); Puffin (Cohort 2)

3. Your course

- 15/02/21 - Spontaneous conversation
Introductions - How to make small talk (openers/developers).
Focus: Small talk in the UK / Cultural differences / Conversation starters
- 22/02/21 - Pronunciation Journey for Arabic speakers
Production and perception of tricky English sounds
Focus: Phonetics / Phonology
- 01/03/21 - How native speakers use the language!
Natural English for different situations
Focus: Real English use and expressions
- 08/03/21 - The Sound Collector
Reciting and writing your own poem
Focus: Suprasegmental aspects of the language (intonation, rhythm and stress)
- 15/03/21 - Long turn speaking
Your opportunity to present a topic of your choice
Focus: Fluency - Fillers - Public Speaking






Figure 12: Course outline presented during induction (Cohort 3: Group Puffin)

Appendix 2: Final report sample


	
<p>XXXXXXXXXXXX</p> <p>Course dates: 18/02/2021 - 18/03/2021 Tutor: XXXXXXXXXXXX Group: Cardiff</p>	
<p>Course outline</p> <p>18/02/2021- Spontaneous conversation Introductions - Asking questions - How to make small talk (openers/developers). Focus: Small talk in the UK / Cultural differences / Conversation starters</p> <p>25/02/2021- Pronunciation Journey for Arabic speakers Production and perception of tricky English sounds Focus: Phonetics / Phonology</p> <p>04/03/2021- Education in different cultures Comparing educational systems in different countries (UK and Palestine) Focus: Real English to give and ask for opinions / debate / interruptions</p> <p>11/03/2021- Solving future problems Discuss and solve problems in groups Focus: 21st century skills - Problem solving - Decision making - Presentation skills</p> <p>18/03/2021- Long turn speaking 5-minute presentation of personal project Focus: Peer feedback - Fluency - Public speaking</p>	
<p>Verbal Presentation</p> <p>Comments: Your presentation on using puppets in teaching was exceptionally good. It was a real highlight of the course.</p> <p>Rather than simply explaining how you would use puppets for teaching, you <i>showed</i> how to do it. This was brilliantly done, making it enjoyable, informative and inspiring.</p> <p>You used humour and confidence to bring your text to life. This was memorable and effective. You even changed the mind of sceptical audience members who didn't feel they could use puppets themselves.</p> <p>You spoke clearly, accurately and in a calm tone. This showed confidence</p>	<p>Self-Reflection Tasks</p> <p>Comments: Your reflections were well written, accurate and thoughtful.</p> <p>You wrote with a conversational tone with a good range of sentence structures and vocabulary which made them both clear and enjoyable to read.</p> <p>You reflected on the language you picked up during the course and how you would incorporate it into your own classes. It sounded as though it was beneficial.</p> <p>I really enjoyed reading your weekly reflections.</p>

Figure 13: CP final report sample (Page 1)

Figure 14: CP final report sample (Page 2)



<p>and made your presentation clear and easy to follow. You delivered a focused, detailed and engaging project.</p>	<p>A few things on accuracy/grammar taken from your reflections:</p> <p>"... not everyone <u>know</u> how to be..."</p> <p>'everyone/body', 'anyone/body', 'noone/body', 'someone/body' + 3rd person verb</p> <p>Eg. <i>Not everyone knows...</i> <i>Everyone loves puppets!</i></p> <p>"..but in a <u>respect</u> way."</p> <p>When used as an adjective "respect" (n) is "respectful" (adj)</p> <p>Eg.. <i>In a respectful way.</i> <i>I found the speech respectful.</i></p>
<p>Overall Comments You participated exceedingly well in all classes and tasks. You demonstrated great communication skills in small group work in breakout rooms as well as within a whole class setting. You were also an active participant within the group who worked really well to use new language. In addition, you gave others really useful feedback on their presentations. You were supportive of peers and showed commitment to the course. You were motivated and used new vocabulary and language really well and accurately.</p> <p>Confidence developed Your confidence in speaking was brilliant. You communicate your ideas clearly and with a relaxed ease. You showed confidence through being able to peer correct and by taking feedback on yourself.</p> <p>Areas to improve Your speaking fluency and accuracy are very good. You also have good pronunciation. To increase your writing accuracy, you could read in English (different kinds of texts, such as, newspaper articles, fiction, academic articles etc). Find something you enjoy! Underline new and interesting sentence structures and pay attention to them.</p>	

<p>Attendance 100%</p>	<p>Everton Machado, Academic Manager Date: 16/04/2021</p>
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Appendix 3: Samples of lesson materials



Figure 15: Sample slides from session focusing on English natural rhythm (Group: Daffodil)

<p>3. Agreeing with an opinion</p> 	<p>Yes, I agree. That's true. I can't agree more. I think so too. That's a good idea. You're absolutely right. That's a great idea. No doubt about it.</p>
<p>4. Disagreeing with an opinion</p> 	<p>I don't agree with you. That's not entirely true. I disagree I'm sorry but</p>

Figure 16: Eliciting useful language in preparation for a debate (Group: Dragon)

Source: Pronunciation Games - Mark Hancock

not	note
rod	road
cloth	clothes
rob	robe

Figure 17: Using the 'pronunciation journey' activity by Mark Hancock to practise tricky minimal pairs (Group: Dylan)

2 teams!
Choose a scenario and suggest a good conversation starter!

Figure 18: Conversation starters noughts and crosses (Group: Puffin)

SPECIAL ONLINE ACTIVITY SESSION

Our friends at UWC Atlantic College would like to invite you to join a free online session!

Practise your pronunciation skills, new vocabulary and give commands in two interactive games you can use with your own students!

MONDAY 11/01/2021 AT 6:00 PM (PST)

Towers of Hanoi

The aim of the game is to transfer differently sized boxes from Table 1 to Table 2. A smaller box cannot be on top of a bigger one and only one box can be moved at a time.

The boxes will be labelled with minimal pairs:

ben	ben
pen	pin

Figure 18: Special extra activity for all CPs run by Atlantic College Experience. CPs had to design a marble-run course.

Appendix 4: Padlet pages (samples)

Cohort 1:

Group Harp: [https://padlet.com/
NickyPartridgePeartree/harp](https://padlet.com/NickyPartridgePeartree/harp)

Group Dragon: [https://padlet.com/
NickyPartridgePeartree/27q7nmkwvu7e3xkh](https://padlet.com/NickyPartridgePeartree/27q7nmkwvu7e3xkh)

Group Castle: [https://padlet.com/
NickyPartridgePeartree/9n3yw55xbdi9043q](https://padlet.com/NickyPartridgePeartree/9n3yw55xbdi9043q)

Cohort 2:

Group Taff: [https://padlet.com/
NickyPartridgePeartree/taff](https://padlet.com/NickyPartridgePeartree/taff)

Group Cardiff: [https://padlet.com/
NickyPartridgePeartree/cardiff](https://padlet.com/NickyPartridgePeartree/cardiff)

Cohort 3:

Group Puffin: [https://padlet.com/
NickyPartridgePeartree/puffin](https://padlet.com/NickyPartridgePeartree/puffin)

PATEFL: [https://padlet.com/pateflassociate/
Bookmarks](https://padlet.com/pateflassociate/Bookmarks)

Appendix 5: Feedback highlights

1. Feedback from teachers

Inductions:

The induction sessions were really useful to set expectations and be aware that students had a reasonable understanding of the course content. This made the first session run smoothly. Students were committed and informed.

Course timing:

One lesson a week over 12 weeks was an ideal amount of time for this course as it allowed the participants to complete tasks around their own work schedules and family responsibilities. Also, the length of the course allowed the participants to create meaningful long-term projects which they could, in some cases, conduct with their own students and report on the outcomes.

Teachers' meetings and academic support:

Excellent! Everton was supportive and extremely helpful with class planning. His ideas and course structure created a brilliant structure. He was always available to assist with planning, student concerns, etc. The teacher meetings in particular were so valuable – Everton and the other teacher gave brilliant ideas, support and advice for dealing with student issues or content.

The course plan provided an important framework for the lessons and suggestions for class activities were also very useful, while still allowing for teachers to have the ability to choose their own activities if they felt more comfortable with this. The weekly teachers meeting was invaluable to provide support to each other and to ensure that the course participants were receiving equivalent guidance.

Students' participation:

Generally, the student attitude and engagement was excellent. They developed wonderful professional relationships which made peer correction a key aspect of their experience. The levels were appropriate for each group.

Having sessions recorded was very beneficial, it ensured students felt confident they would not miss too much if they had internet issues (which could have been really stressful for them). The self-reflections was an excellent addition to the course and those who committed to the practice got so much out of this.

2. Feedback from PATEFL

Communication with Peartree Languages (email and social media)

Peartree languages has a great communication system that makes working with them is a joyful experience. Right from the beginning, we had an introductory Zoom meeting and we agreed on the best way to implement and follow up the course. They organise regular meeting to discuss all the details then update us on the implementation of the course. Emails were sent before and after all the meetings. Responses are fast and effective, WhatsApp option was also there for quick contact. A Facebook group was created and formed a great way for announcing events and exchanging experiences and reflecting on the course activities.

Course organisation:

The Peartree organisation is a model to teach! They have a great way to manage the lists of participants and chasing those who miss events or classes and they regularly update us on the date to help when needed. Accordingly, in each week, we have accurate information on the activities currently done, the drop-out cases, the absentees, and this is helping us a lot in our work.

Course design:

The course was based on the needs of our teachers and in the introductory meetings we had a deep discussion on the context in Palestine and what is missed in teacher training, so this course is tailored to meet these needs and on the input of the PATEFL.

3. Feedback from CPs

I am so proud of myself to be a member in your PRELIM Course as we break the borders to be with each other (colleagues) and with Peartree Languages and my tutor ... I learned many things about certain words ... really thank you very much...

...a billion thanks to our tutor who gives us a big chance to practise language in amazing way and share new ideas in teaching smoothly. Also, self-reflection is benefit for me and the constructive feedback who gives us. Practically, I learned how to create a comfortable environment to my students and I have used it in my classes. All things are creative.

It was really helpful. It increases my self-confidence in using the language and it gives me a hint of using different untraditional ways in displaying the teaching material.

In my opinion it was really an amazing experience in this course. The timing was suitable and the sessions were so wonderful and constructive. The tutor was clever in choosing the activities and she was trying to encourage us all the time to express our ideas and thoughts in the best possible ways.

I enjoyed this experience especially the chance to meet people from other places, to work with them as a team and to learn from their experience.

I enjoy the breakout rooms as it gave us more opportunity to practise the elements of the course.

The PRELIM speaking course is really exciting. The most interesting thing to me is that I've learnt something new and different from what I usually do in my classes. I usually follow the traditional way of teaching whenever I want to teach the students something new like vocabulary or speaking in which I use the (PPP) approach. I find it easier to use with young learners because they learn better by drilling and repeating. The fact that PRELIM Course helping me to use the new methods and technology. It completely reverses the traditional dynamics. It encouraged me to rethink of the way I teach any skill. now I am aware that my students should spend the majority of the time inside the class working on practising and using the language in guided way. Also, I learned that It's better to start my class with an activity to break the ice between me and the students themselves to get them ready and excited for the lesson. This will put the students in a comfort and drive them to participate effectively in the class.

Teaching English as a second language is a big challenge; it's not easy to completely communicate with students from various grades in English. For this reason, I don't have the chance to speak or write English all the time, and that I have sometimes to use Arabic for more clarification. Therefore, there is a big gap between how I used to practise the language while I was a university student, and how I use it as a teacher. In other words, I don't thoroughly have the same old speaking and writing fluency, which makes me desperate to some extent.

At this point, Peartree Languages School alongside with PATEFL provided the online PRELIM course that mainly focused on speaking. That course was of a great experience to me. Actually, it made me more confident when speaking; I can express my feelings, experiences and ideas freely and effectively. Meanwhile, my writing skills were refreshed by generating ideas and using a wide range of both old and new expressions.

Proud to be PRELIMER 🇸🇦

Argentina

Project background

1. Description of the partners

Argentina: APIBA and ACPI are non-profit English Teachers Associations in Buenos Aires and Cordoba, Argentina. Both belong to the wider National Federation of English Teacher Associations in Argentina FAAPI, which oversees and supports the programme. The team is led by Paula Lopez Cano and Ana Cecilia Cad and supported by four other members who were present in meetings and supported the project very closely. The full team in Argentina was formed by the members below:

- APIBA President – Paula Lopez Cano
- APIBA Vice-President – Romina Arena
- ACPI Secretary – Ana Cecilia Cad
- ACPI Executive Committee Member – Yanina Caffarati
- FAAPI President – Gisela Laurent
- FAAPI Secretary – Ariel Olmedo

ACPI and APIBA have a total membership of 500, but this project was aimed at non-members to be able to reach lower-language-level teachers working in state schools.

“Our interest in offering the PRELIM course stems from our wish to target teachers in all provinces throughout the country with limited language proficiency regardless of gender to help them grow more confident about their language use, enrich their cultural experience and enhance their sense of personal agency and autonomy as well.” Statement from ETA’s PRELIM Application.

St Clare’s, Oxford: Founded in 1953, St Clare’s Oxford is a charitable trust with a mission to advance international education and understanding. With 27 buildings in North Oxford, the College consists of two sections: our IB World School and our International College, which offers English Language and university pathways courses for students aged 16+. Additionally, St Clare’s runs a broad range of Summer and short courses for juniors, teenagers and adults. Finally, we welcome a number of closed groups throughout the year, with tailor-made programmes which can include teacher training.

Online delivery of St Clare’s courses began last year, delivering full terms of online teaching of the IB Diploma curriculum, a range of pre-university and undergraduate courses, IB teacher workshops on behalf of the IBO and a wide range of online summer programmes with more than 140 students across 332 student weeks.

- Academic Director ELT – Denise Hopgood
- Summer and Short Courses Operations Director – Patricia Alvarez

2. Key features of the context

- Total applications received and considered: 180
- Total course participants who completed the full course and received a certificate: 65 (58 female, seven male)
- Located in different parts of the country, some in cities but the majority in rural areas
- Good internet connection in general but some cases of poor connectivity
- The main factor for availability and connectivity of the CPs was the school holidays in Argentina. The first cohort took part during four weeks of summer vacation. The second cohort had to suddenly return to their respective schools earlier than expected due to a change in the national academic year calendar.

3. Outline of the course and rationale

Course structure

The structure suggested and agreed for the language improvement course was based on the above principles:

- (i) Language awareness and improvement including:
 - Accuracy issues, for example, raising awareness of Pronunciation and the Phonemic Chart including the basics of connected speech and improvement in grammatical tense choices
 - Skills development – reading, listening, writing and speaking
 - Building fluency through a range of activities dependent on the participants
 - A thematic approach to learning, with themes chosen by the teaching association which will interest the participants or their students

(60 per cent of course content)

- (ii) The review and development of basic English Language Teaching concepts, for example:
 - Blended learning
 - Task-based learning
 - The flipped classroom
 - Online resources and apps for teachers and students alike
 - The opportunity to ‘micro-teach’ their classmates using one of these approaches.

(15 per cent of course content)

- (iii) A cross-cultural overview to promote St Clare’s mission to promote international education and understanding:

- Sharing cultural similarities and differences between cultures
- British education system from pre-school to university compared to ODA country
- Multicultural education

(15 per cent of course content)

- (iv) Activities and events to boost confidence speaking in English and to develop a community of practice

- British Culture Quiz
- Participant presentations based on their portfolio of work

(10 per cent of course content)

Project findings

1. Working in partnership

The relationship with our partners in Argentina couldn't have been better. Thanks to our previous experience working with Argentinian students, schools and teachers, we could anticipate their requirements and understand their background. We were pleased to see that those assumptions were generally correct, which helped us to understand each other very well from our first meeting in October onwards. We had face-to-face weekly communication via Zoom meetings during the design and recruitment stages and near-daily communication prior to the delivery phase starting, and during the first two weeks of the course. We all wanted to make sure that both sides agreed on each step of the process and had everyone's support and hard work throughout the whole period, which was invaluable.

Report from ACPI, APIBA and FAAPI

From the very first meeting with our partners at St Clare's, it became clear that they had the necessary experience to take on the challenge of designing and delivering the course. Our partners were very responsive to our needs and took pains to inquire deeply into our educational context and the teachers we would be targeting. They had already thought of possible course options and had planned an initial assessment strategy. We soon agreed on key aspects of course design and the course plan reflected a full understanding of our teachers' needs. We believed the contents and activities were very well sequenced, varied and clearly geared towards increasing participants' confidence in the use of language.

As regards recruitment of teachers, our partners at St Clare's were immensely helpful in crafting the registration forms and placement tests so that they would include all the necessary information for the selection process.

Learning point

- Frequency and quality of communications with partners is key in every step of the process to deliver a successful product



Figure 1: Meeting with ETA partners before Christmas

2. Working within the CoP

The Community of Practice has been a great tool and support for the whole project. Working in an Independent School as opposed to a big corporate group, we lack sometimes a global vision and direction from the outside, which was what the CoP group provided in this occasion. It was a new collaborative way of working that we found extremely helpful, especially with the following:

- To meet other colleagues going through similar processes
- tT share ideas on course design and approaches
- To find resources for course materials
- To learn about different approaches and solutions
- Personalised one-to-one mentoring from NILE

Learning point

- Being surrounded by other providers in the market helps with your own awareness of the quality of your own product

3. Working with the CPs

The majority of the CPs were really committed to the course, classes, attended at least 80 per cent of the live classes and completed their portfolio of work.

Feedback from the teachers:

Working on the PRELIM project was a highly rewarding experience. The enthusiastic participants shared their experiences of teaching in Argentina and challenges they faced. To address these issues, a range of interactive teaching techniques were demonstrated, followed by discussions considered how to adapt methods depending on the age and level of students. It was also an opportunity to explore how to incorporate blending learning into lessons and to learn from each other. Carla Browne

It was a delight teaching on the course as the participants brought so much enthusiasm to it. Some of the strengths of the course were enabling the teachers to build confidence in themselves through group work and by building community, which they have maintained post-course. The main difficulty with the course was ensuring regular attendance as many teachers were juggling full work schedules. Sarah Stretton

Learning point

- It is beneficial that those delivering language content courses to other language teachers are also teacher trainers

4. Designing/delivering the course

Design process

The course was designed in close relationship with the ETA in a series of weekly Zoom meetings during phase one of the project. The following processes and outcomes were achieved through close collaboration:

- Identification of areas of course content (themes and language)
- Selection of the design model from a range of possibilities
- Creating course process maps showing progression
- Sharing and analysing material samples for contextual appropriateness
- Admin form design including applications, testing and needs analysis

As a result of the application and needs analysis process, we discovered that 80 per cent of applicants and participants were B2 level and above, which was very different to initial expectations. This meant that the course content had to be revised by the teachers and developed alongside the delivery of cohort 1 (January–February) and then was repeated in cohort 2 (February–March). It is a mark of the flexibility and professionalism of the St Clare's teachers involved, who met almost daily until halfway of the first cohort at the end of January, along with the collaborative support of ACPI/APIBA, that this change was in no way detrimental to the quality of the initiative.

Report from ACPI, APIBA and FAAPI

We expected applications from teachers in the A2–B1 range, but reaching the teachers who need language improvement and persuading them to take part in these programmes proved to be a major challenge in our context. Another issue which may have affected this outcome is the earlier start of the school year, which shortened the summer recess of teachers across the country. Nevertheless, St Clare's adjusted the course design to teachers at B2–C2 level, and were very supportive of the whole process of recruitment and were always quick to suggest ways of reaching more teachers.

Delivery

Max total students: 100 – following the needs analysis and placement tests students were divided into eight groups, split between two dedicated TEFL-Q ELT teachers, each with over ten years of experience.

Length: Two x 4-week courses

Dates: Session A: 25 Jan–19 Feb 2021 Session B: 22 Feb–19 March 2021

50 students in each session divided into four groups: TTG01 = lower intermediate B1; TTG02 = upper intermediate B2; TTG03 = upper int/adv but lacking confidence; TTG04 = all C1+ more confident

Time: TTG01 and TTG03 Monday to Friday 13:00–14:00 UK time

TTG02 and TTG04 Monday to Friday 14:15–15:15 UK time

Class size: Ten to 15 students per group according to language level

Lessons: Five face-to-face live hours per week + five hours' flexible asynchronous self-study classes to prepare/follow up/document face-to-face classes

Welcome and Induction: All participants joined the live Welcome Ceremony and Induction presentation via Zoom or watched the recorded video

Platforms: Zoom for the live face-to-face classes and Microsoft Teams for the group calendar, self-study assignments and materials platform

Report from ACPI, APIBA and FAAPI

As for the development of the course itself, we want to stress the high quality of the teachers in charge. Their professionalism and strong commitment to the task proved highly motivating to the participating teachers. Both were excellent models of teaching and very willing to share their classroom experience, materials, academic bibliography and wide-ranging repertoire of useful resources. The classroom atmosphere was warm and welcoming, and a cheerful feeling of cooperation prevailed all the time.

This fostered a sense of achievement and boosted teachers' confidence, leading to a very high level of satisfaction with the course.

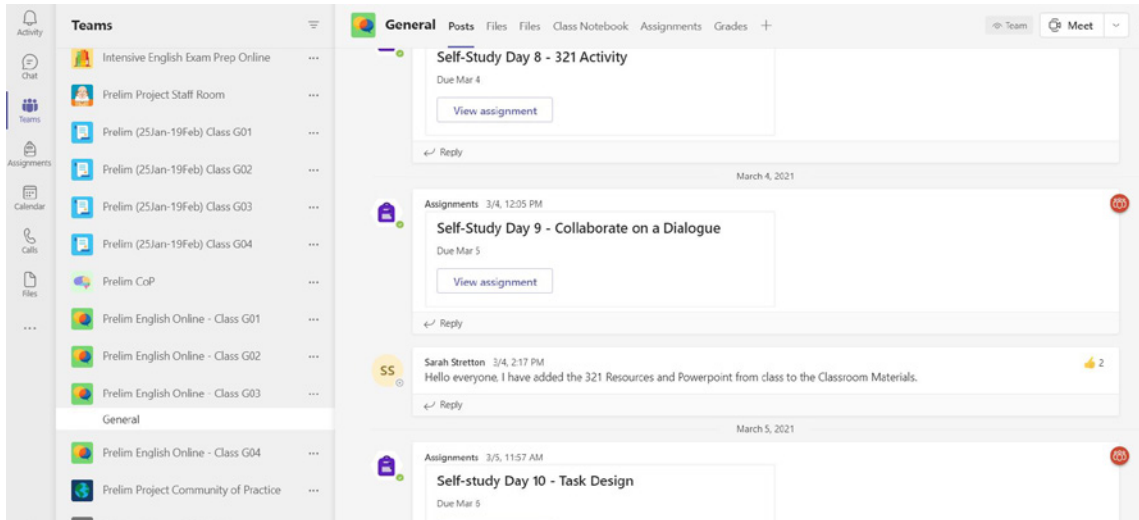


Figure 13: self-study tasks on MS Teams

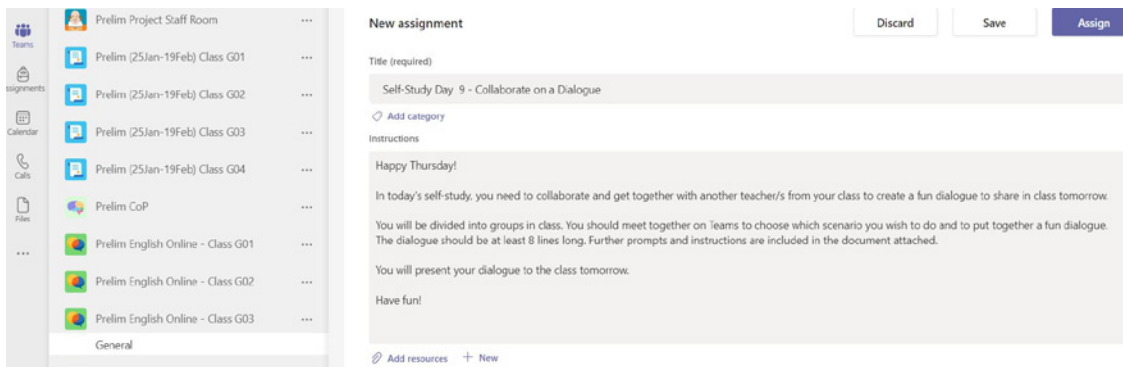


Figure 14: Assignment 9 instructions on MS Teams

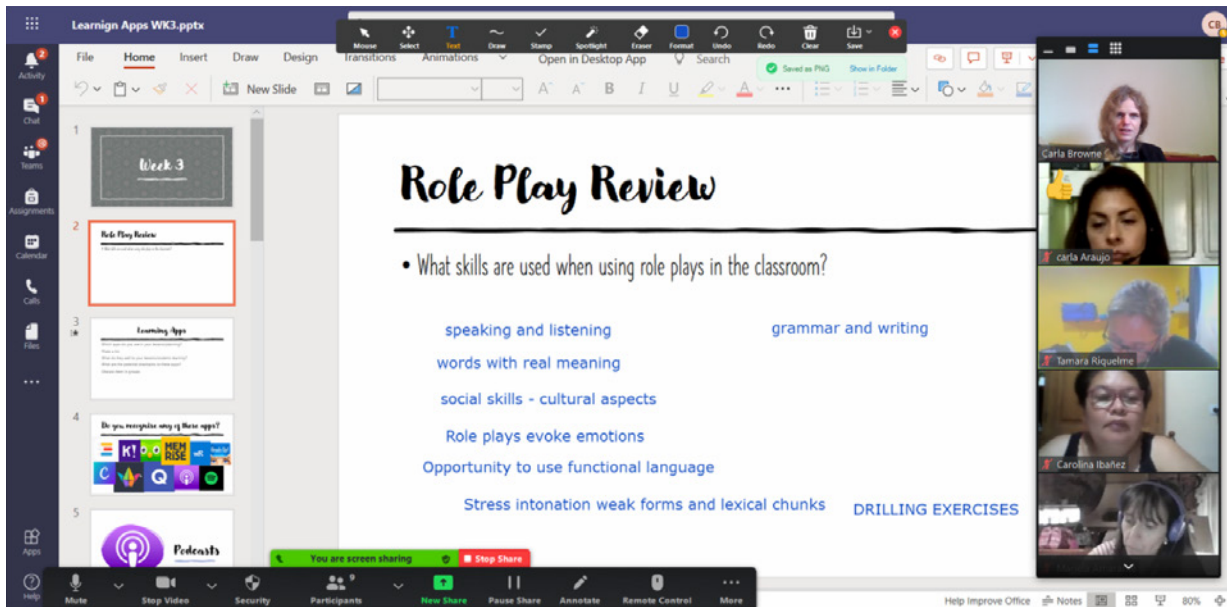


Figure 15: End-of-course CP live presentation

Learning points

- **Managing expectations** – it’s very important to be clear and manage programme recipient expectations, which might not be reachable, so prepare trainers for changes and adaptability
- **Emergent design approaches** – while they are more challenging, nevertheless have better outcomes not only for the team but for the CPs

5. Course outcomes

Evaluation and monitoring

Evaluation

There were two main methods of evaluation used for the course:

- Final presentation
- Portfolio of work

The final presentations that took place in live class time during the final week were based on festivals and celebrations. The criteria used to evaluate the presentations including grammatical accuracy, register/style and fluency.

The portfolio of work was developed by the teachers, mainly in the asynchronous self-study sessions with feedback and monitoring of this provided in/out of class. The portfolio of work consisted of follow-up work/preparatory work for class time.

Final teachers’ evaluations were also provided in the form of an end-of-course report to each individual student including global comments/CEF grade, portfolio of work and the final presentation (see Appendix 2).

Monitoring

Regular monitoring of classroom attendance and classroom practice took place. Both by St Clare’s, the course provider and the ETA during week one of each cohort and the final presentations.

**Post-course activities:
end-of-course questionnaire**

Two weeks following completion of the courses we emailed and added to the Community of Practice our end-of-course questionnaire. The key three areas focused on the participants ratings for their lessons and content. The responses across the areas were consistently positive:

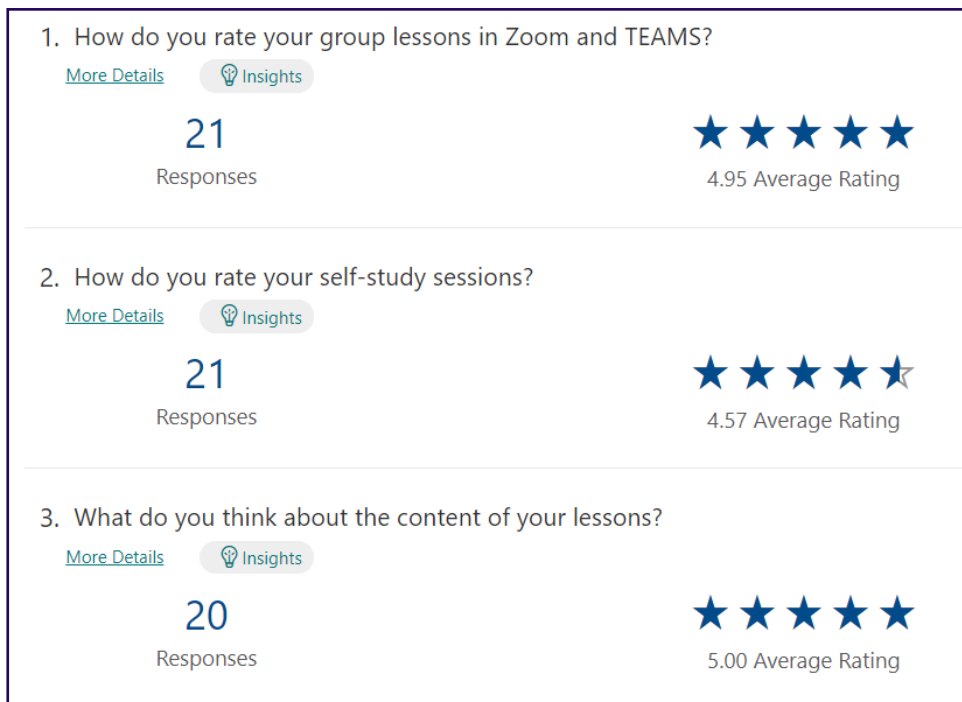


Figure 5: end-of-course questionnaire

Specific comments from the course participants

What was the best thing about your course?

- *Being able to improve and update my teaching skills. Sharing with colleagues.*
- *Listening and speaking English to a native teacher. Improving my teaching by sharing ideas.*
- *The immediate feedback, the opportunity to share ideas from different contexts and the great encouragement, ideas and support our tutor gave us.*
- *The course helped me refresh my English before starting a new school period. Besides, it was wonderful to be able to share teaching and personal experiences with colleagues from Argentina and the UK.*

What useful suggestions do you have for improving the course?

- *The use of new technologies in my classes.*
- *To increase its duration and to focus more on how to use the technological devices we have at our disposal.*
- *I would do it again at the beginning of each year to reflect on my practice.*
- *The course was very useful and attractive. Perhaps it can include more activities for each level of students.*

Specific comments from the STC Teachers

The highlights for me were meeting so many talented, committed teachers in Argentina. Using both MS teams with Zoom together helped to create a “real-life” classroom feel. Problems which occurred were mostly related to internet connections in Argentina and the early return of teachers to classrooms in response to C19. To ensure greater participation in future, we could consider offering a lunch-hour slot as we did in the second course. Overall, this was a fantastic project to be part of and inspirational for me as a teacher. Carla Browne

The strength of our course lay in our adaptability and open course content that enabled the teacher to tailor the lessons to themselves. I thoroughly enjoyed facilitating the participants development and confidence. Sarah Stretton

Key learning points

- **Teacher ingenuity and flexibility** – teachers had to respond very last minute to changes in expected CEFR level of participants and adjust materials and course content accordingly
- It is beneficial that those delivering language content courses to other language teachers are also teacher trainers
- **Managing expectations** – it’s very important to be clear and manage programme recipient expectations, which might not be reachable, so prepare trainers for changes and adaptability
- **Emergent design approaches** – while they are more challenging, nevertheless have better outcomes not only for the team but for the CPs
- **Team confidence and morale** – winning these kinds of bids at difficult moments can prove to be a huge boost to morale and confidence, as well as confidence in having achieved something and done something new. During uncertain times believe in new projects that will boost energy to you and your team, being confident in trying new things is key.
- **Frequency and quality of communications** with partners is key in every step of the process to deliver a successful product
- **Team experience and enthusiasm for the ‘new’** – while St Clare’s is adept at teacher training, with experience as an organisation of delivering those online, those designing and delivering the course had never done so before and so the course has boosted our confidence in our own ability to do something new under pressure and deliver it with quality
- **Self-awareness** – being surrounded by other providers in the market helps with your own awareness of the quality of your own product
- *Report from ACPI, APIBA and FAAPI* – The participating ETAs in Argentina ACPI, APIBA, and FAAPI, our Federation, are deeply grateful for the opportunity we have had to offer this excellent course to teachers from across the country. This has helped us reach more teachers and enhance our role as professional associations fully committed to the continuous development of their members. We look forward to building on this partnership to strengthen links with all stakeholders in this project, as we are convinced that these cooperative efforts are increasingly successful in achieving the goals of our organisations.

Appendix 1: Course outline

Sample week course outline:

UK time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
13:00 14:00	<p>Exploring the classroom</p> <p>Navigate your students around the primary and secondary classrooms with this helpful language</p> <p>Lexical Development</p>	<p>Classroom Language</p> <p>Exploring instruction and concept checking in the classroom and analysing when to use L1.</p>	<p>Can you help me please?</p> <p>Use the 3-2-1 approach to fluency development with these language chunks for use in the classroom</p> <p>Essential Skills</p>	<p>Role model</p> <p>Improve your provision of verbal feedback to students through this task-based approach</p>	<p>Using Dialogues</p> <p>Share your team dialogues in class and put a fun Red Riding Hood role play into practice!</p> <p>Learner Community</p>
Flexible Self-study	<p>Lexical Toolkit</p> <p>Continue to develop your classroom language toolkit for Primary and Secondary classes</p> <p>Portfolio Development</p>	<p>Language Focus</p> <p>Consider the examples of classroom language on the worksheet and how you might develop/improve upon it.</p> <p>Portfolio Development</p>	<p>3-2-1, go!</p> <p>Review the fluency approach used in class today and apply to a typical primary/secondary lesson.</p> <p>Portfolio Development</p>	<p>Team Work Dialogue</p> <p>Collaborate with your classmates to prepare a dialogue to present in class.</p> <p>Portfolio Development</p>	<p>Task Design</p> <p>Design a role play lesson you can use in your own teaching context.</p> <p>Portfolio Development</p>

Appendix 2

Certificate:



Personalised Feedback:

Overall student's performance & contribution: Natalia made a significant contribution to the course and demonstrated a real commitment to professional development. She enthusiastically participated in our live sessions and brought a lot of insight into our discussions.

Portfolio of work: The work Natalia completed for her self-study demonstrated a clear critical and reflective eye on applying the course content to her own teaching context. The materials she made were engaging and appropriately tailored to appropriate contexts.

Presentation evaluation: Natalia gave a warm, informative presentation on Independence Day as it is celebrated in her hometown. Her presentation was well-structured and prepared. It was effectively supported by a PowerPoint. A standout of her talk was the inclusion of personal touches such as a video of her son. Overall, it was effective and concise.

Brazil

Project background

1. Description of the partners

BRAZ-TESOL Public School SIG

The Public School Sig was created in July 2012 to support English teachers working across Brazil in public school with training and development, in English language and teaching methodology. One of their aims is to build a national community of practice.

The main contact for this project was Maria Valésia Silva da Silva, President of the BRAZ-TESOL Rio Grande do Sul Chapter and Leader of the BRAZ-TESOL Public School SIG. She was the driving force behind the project at the Brazil end and submitted the original project application.

Bell Educational Services Ltd

Bell is a language education and teacher training provider based in Cambridge. Bell's Education Programmes department (through whom this project was delivered) also provide educational consultancy services and work with partners around the world to offer teacher training and English language tuition. The main contacts for this project were Kristina Smith (Trainer and Course Developer) and Tom Beakes (Academic Manager for Bell's Education Programmes). Kristina acted as the main project coordinator for the project.

2. Key features of the context

Brazil consists of five regions, each with its own characteristics. Since 2017 English has been the mandatory foreign language taught across Brazil. The new national curriculum – Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC) – is project-based and needs a good level of English to implement.

Although a huge, diverse country, the following features are found across the country:

- Public school English teachers often have under-developed English skills
- English is generally taught mainly through Portuguese
- Public school learners tend to come from monolingual backgrounds and may not see the relevance of English to their lives
- Large class sizes and high teaching hours are typical
- Teachers are not connected with colleagues across the country unless they belong to a group like BRAZ-TESOL, which most public school teachers do not
- Internet availability is patchy, especially in rural areas

3. Outline of the course and rationale

Course objective (as agreed with BRAZ-TESOL): to support Brazilian teachers of English with a language level of around B1 at Public Schools to use English more confidently in their classrooms.

The course consisted of:

- Three two-week blocks of study, with one-week breaks inbetween each block
- Approx. 25 hours of study inc. self-study tasks and webinars
- Four self-study topics in each block
- Eight live webinars on Zoom (six weekly classes, one welcome/orientation webinar and one 'bonus' Carnival webinar)

Course schedule and topics

PRELIM Language Development for English Teachers-Brazil

Welcome webinar – January 30, 2021

Orientation – 5 days

Block 1 – February 03–13, 2021

- 1 You and your teaching
- 2 Important terms
- 3 Starting and ending lessons
- 4 Introducing topics

Break

Extra Carnival webinar – February 20

Block 2 – February 22–March 06

- 5 Giving Instructions
- 6 Asking questions
- 7 Eliciting
- 8 Telling stories

Break

Block 3 – March 15–27

- 9 Large Classes
- 10 Commenting on student work
- 11 To be decided
- 12 Referring to previous lessons

End of course – Saturday March 27

Participation summary

- Over 400 teachers initially registered
- We estimate around 250 teachers were active at some point during the course
- The ETA monitored webinar attendance and online participation – and ultimately 120 teachers were awarded ‘course completion’ certificates based on their webinar attendance and task contributions
- Approximately 70 per cent of the 120 who fully completed the course were female, 30 per cent male

Project findings

1. Working in partnership

- Initially we had weekly meetings with BRAZ-TESOL. These dropped off and we relied on Telegram, WhatsApp and email after the course started.
- The time difference made having meetings with the mentors and representatives difficult once the course began. We managed one all together and otherwise used the Telegram group they created for communication.

Learning point:

- More formalised and regular channels of communication between local mentors and UK tutors would benefit a large course of this type

2. Working within the CoP

- We followed the Slack communications and attended most of the catch-up meetings, which were a useful way of sharing ideas and crowd-sourcing solutions to problems
- Through the CoP Kristina was able to directly contact a Brazilian colleague from another organisation to get supplementary information about the local context

Learning point:

- Slack seemed a user-friendly and efficient way to communicate together on a variety of topics. Use of a similar platform should be considered for future projects.

3. Working with the CPs

All pre-course communications with participants took place via BRAZ-TESOL. BRAZ-TESOL divided CPs into the five regions and also recruited volunteer teachers (with suitable experience and language proficiency) from their organisation to act as mentors for each group. The job of the mentor was to be a presence on the Telegram and Facebook groups, answer questions and maintain the positive tone of the course. This allowed the UK tutors to focus on course design and webinars, etc. A second group called representatives, who answered a call from the mentors and worked in the same regions, spread the word locally about the course.

Registration

The pre-course questionnaire and registration details were worked out together with BRAZ-TESOL and managed entirely by BRAZ-TESOL. They advertised the course online and through email. We followed the following steps for registration and course orientation:

- **Step 1:** Teachers were asked to self-assess their level of English using a short online test
- **Step 2:** Teachers registered using a Google Form
- **Step 3:** We held a 60-minute welcome webinar with an explanation of how the course was structured plus we shared the course materials website

During the course:

- CPs accessed asynchronous content via Google site
- The main communication platforms during the course were Telegram and Facebook
- The social media platforms had different purposes:
 - Teachers were grouped according to the five regions in Telegram groups, to help build relationships with other teachers in their region. Teachers could use Portuguese or English on Telegram, but were asked to practise their English as much as possible. The self-study tasks required them to share work for certain activities with their Telegram group.
 - A Facebook group was created for all the teachers on the course to join, with the aim of turning this into a community of practice at the end of the course. We asked teachers to only use English on Facebook.

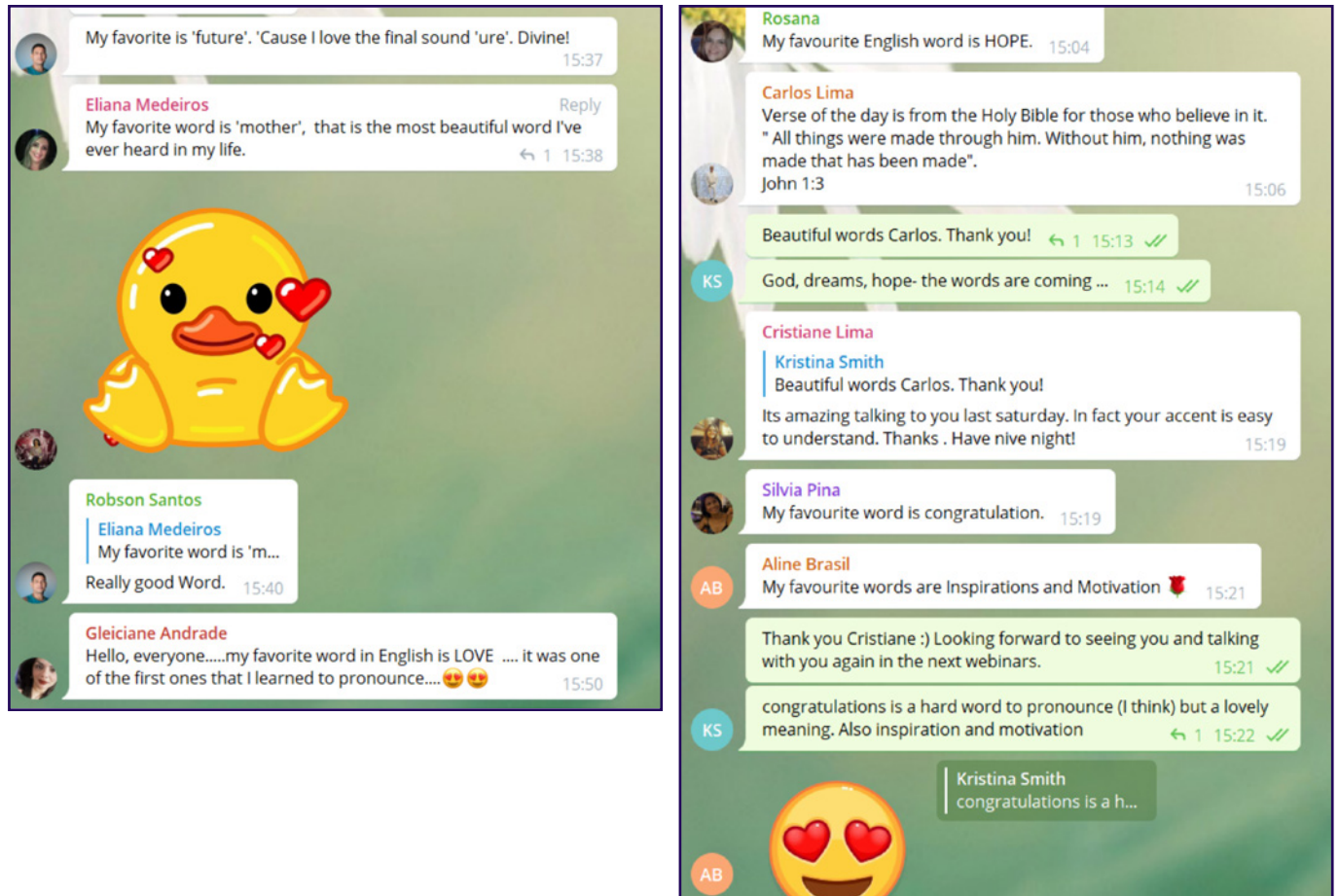
Telegram examples:

1. We set out to create a warm, caring atmosphere so that teachers would lose their shyness. For example, one of the first activities on Telegram was to share a favourite English word. It continued well into the first two weeks with teachers going back and adding more favourite words:

An example from the North group:

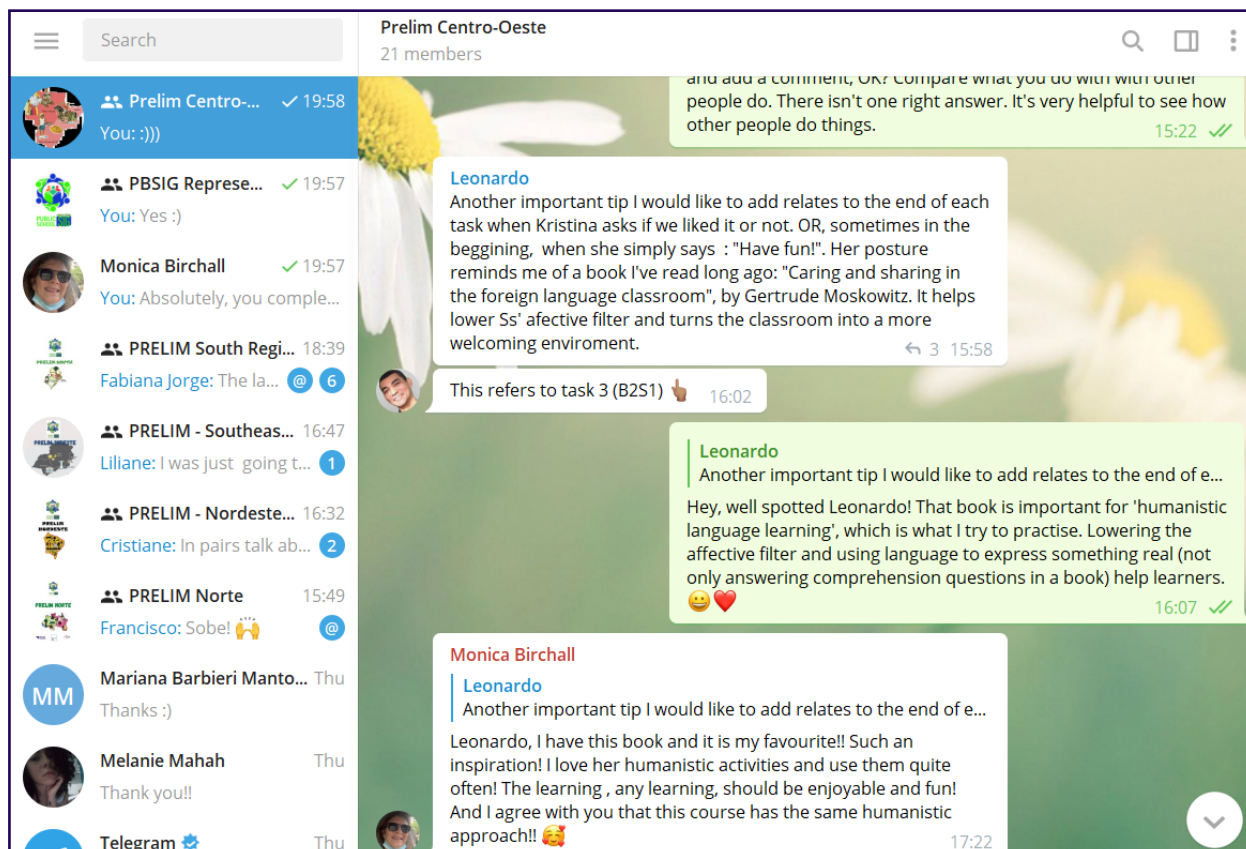
An example from the North-East group:

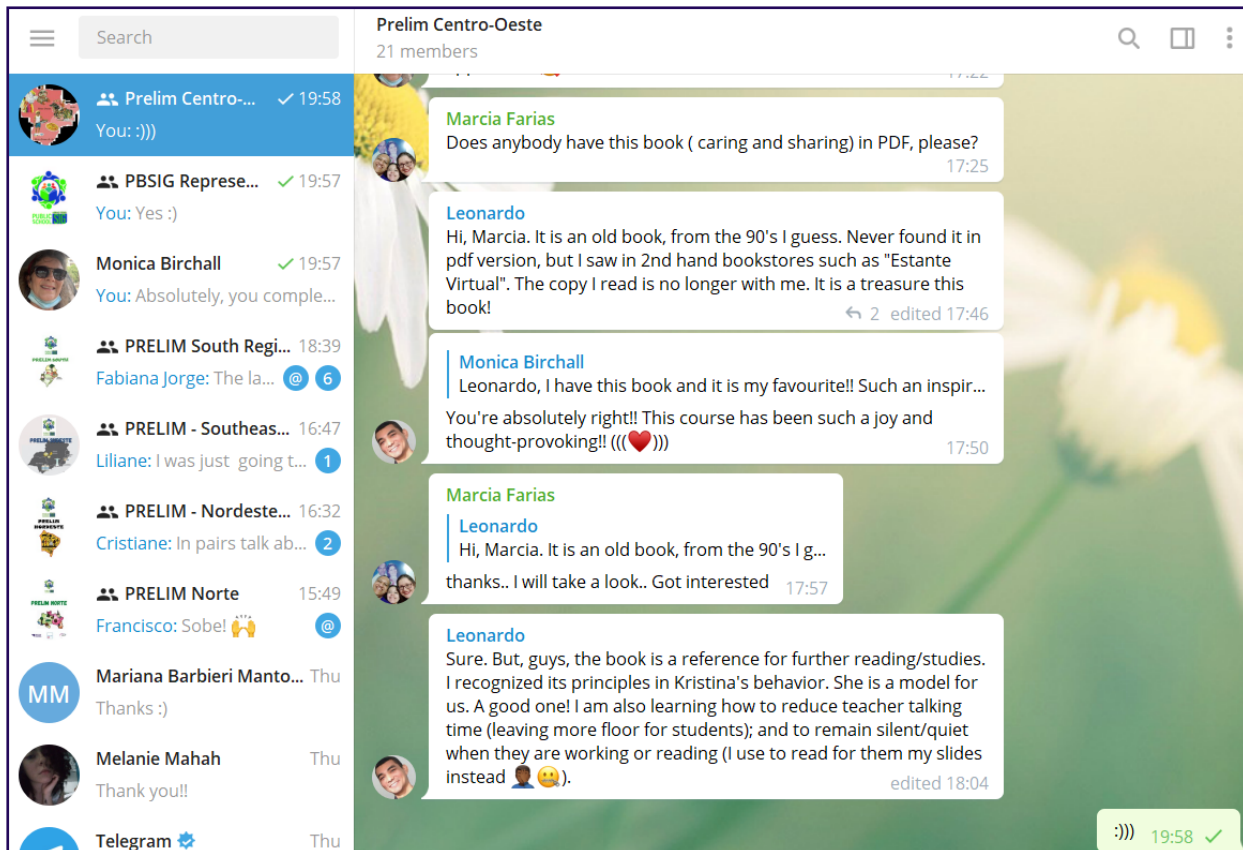
Figure 1: Telegram examples



This humanistic approach was spotted by a CP in the Central-West group:

Figure 2: the humanistic approach





2. Some teachers were either shy or had other difficulties with speaking English. Colleagues in the Telegram groups were super supportive. The conversation went on across a few days.

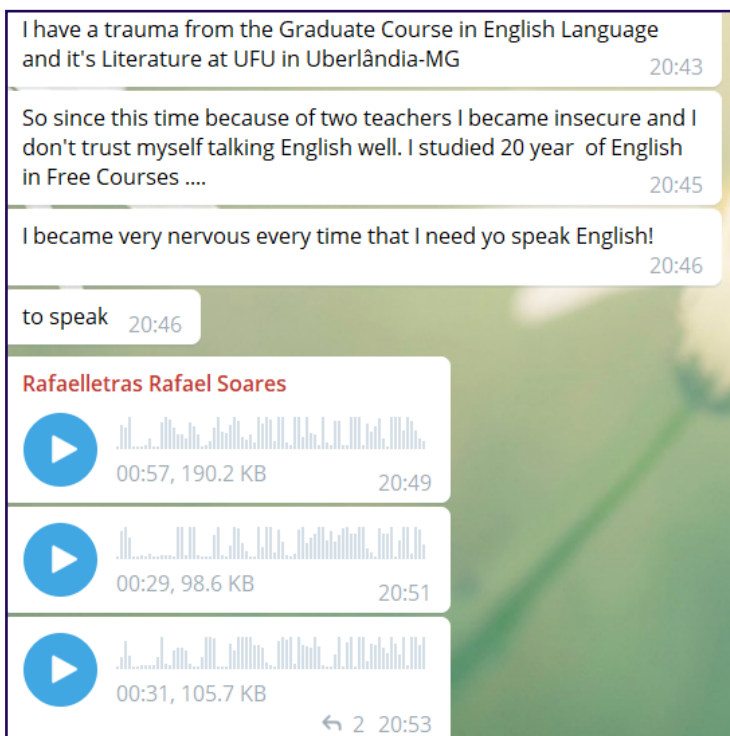


Figure 3: shyness speaking English

There were breakthroughs when some teachers unmuted themselves on Zoom (usually after we had finished recording) and said in English that they had spoken English for the first time with someone.

After a webinar in the middle of the course:

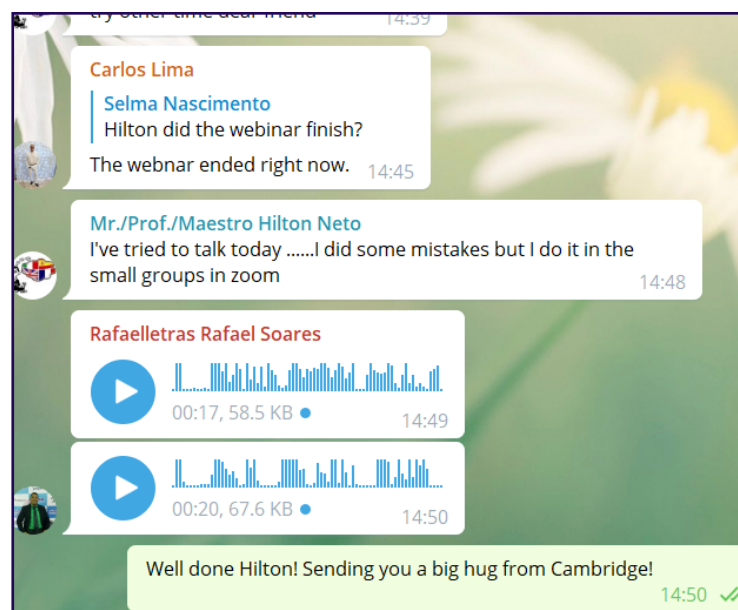


Figure 4: speaking English for the first time

Learning points:

- Registration system and process needs to be carefully planned to manage initial registration for such large numbers, e.g. clarify roles and responsibilities
- Key demographic information should be added to registration information (e.g. rural/urban, gender, age of students taught, etc.), which can inform course planning and impact analysis
- Accurate assessment of English proficiency is important in order to recruit the people most in need of the course. We relied on self-reporting of level for this project, which meant we had many participants who had a much higher level of English than the materials were designed for.
- Build in 'orientation' time between welcome webinar and the course start date to allow time for CPs to join social media groups and organise the regional Telegram groups
- Use of local mentors was vital in maintaining communication and keeping the tone of the course, and adequate time should be spent on induction/training for these key roles

4. Designing/delivering the course

Course design process

- No needs analysis was carried out with participants, as we didn't know who had signed up to the course at the course design stage
- BRAZ-TESOL and Bell team met weekly to agree on course objectives and how to manage the work. At one meeting a Director of Pedagogy at the Ministry of Education joined us to help finalise the format and content.
- All self-study materials were designed between December 2020 and January 2021 by Bell trainers, including a Brazilian ELT teacher
- Materials/content for the live Zoom meetings were designed during the course in order to reflect the development of the teachers as they bonded and worked through the course

Learning points:

- Ministry input was useful to ensure content and course structure met local/national needs
- Having a Portuguese speaker available as a consultant and occasional materials writer helped us ensure materials were culturally appropriate and she supported translation where needed

Teaching tools/course platform

We selected the following platforms/tools:

- Google site – for hosting course materials and recordings of live sessions; no log-in required, so reduces need for tech support and increases accessibility
- Telegram (suggested by BRAZ-TESOL instead of WhatsApp as late joiners can still see earlier messages and don't miss out) for messaging and sharing of tasks and materials
- Facebook (private group page) open to all participants to act as a community of practice for sharing of ideas and materials
- Email – for course administration
- Zoom – for live webinars (two per block); we employed an ICT/Zoom trainer to act as tech support during some Zoom sessions so that tutors could focus on presenting

Learning points:

- Offering different options for communications worked well with a large cohort, e.g. Facebook and Telegram offered similar functions and participants could use which ever suited them best, or both if they wanted
- Telegram groups became very crowded with posts. Other platforms, e.g. Flipgrid might be better to share and allow comments on each other's work.
- Having technical support during webinars is invaluable with large groups – help was needed to handle different devices and connectivity issues during the earlier Zoom meetings
- Live classes require significant planning and support (rehearsals, debriefs, tech checks, etc.), which should be factored into budgetary considerations

Course delivery

- The self-study materials were a combination of videos, worksheets and offline tasks
- Webinars were prepared each week and could be fine-tuned to meet the needs of the teachers in response to their self-study tasks

Examples of course materials and webinars can be viewed at:

<https://sites.google.com/view/examplebrazilprelimmaterials20/home>

Below we share some samples of the type of tasks and interaction taking place during the course. Some of these were led by the UK tutors, others arose spontaneously and came from the participants themselves.

a/ Teachers really enjoyed the networking aspect of the synchronous classes. In breakout rooms they shared ideas with people from across Brazil. One CP made an image and a map to show who he spoke to (see images below).

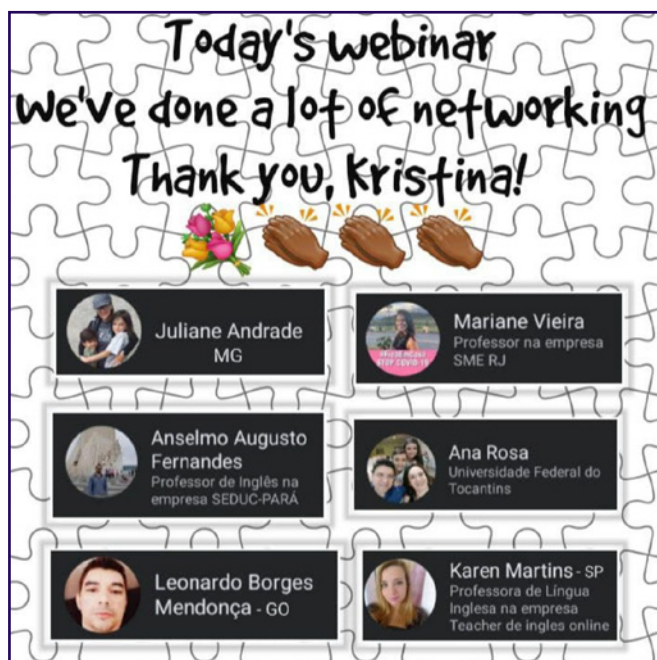
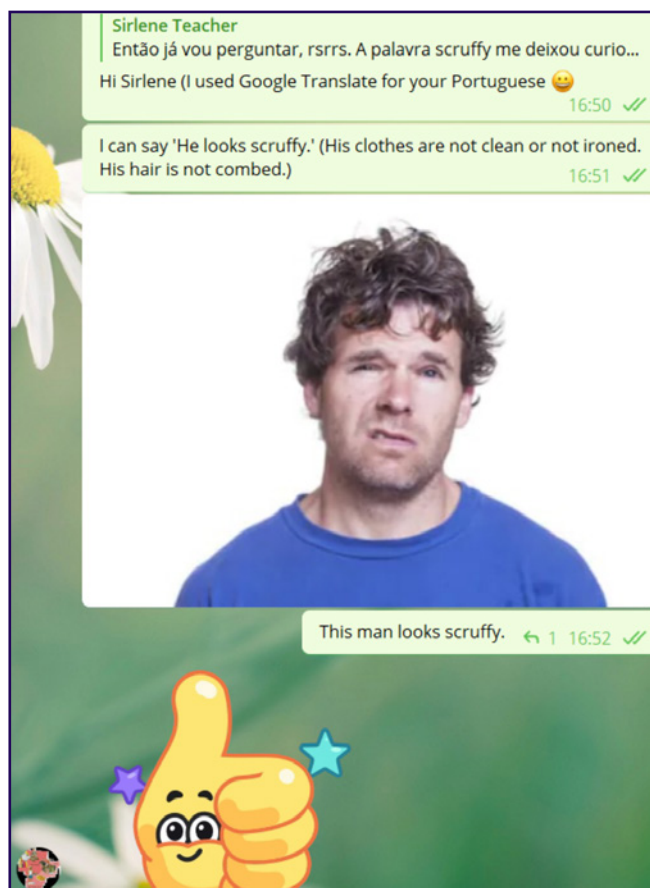
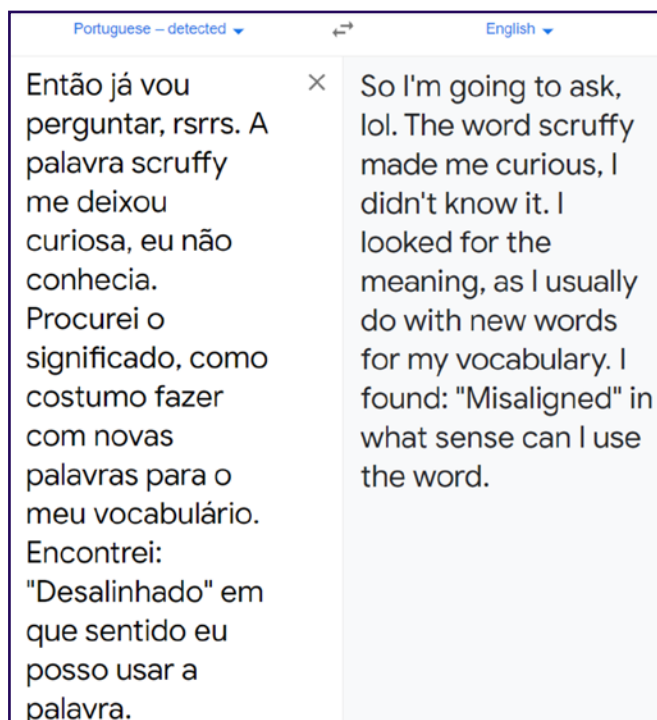


Figure 5: networking

b/ There were many opportunities to negotiate meaning, especially with Google translate. One teacher wanted a word in Portuguese and here a tutor responded. In other cases the CPs or mentors helped with vocabulary:

Figure 6: negotiating meaning



c/ We shared pictures and information about our hometowns, countries and interests, which increased interaction and took advantage of social media. Using social media for more than lesson activities.

An example from the North Region Telegram group:

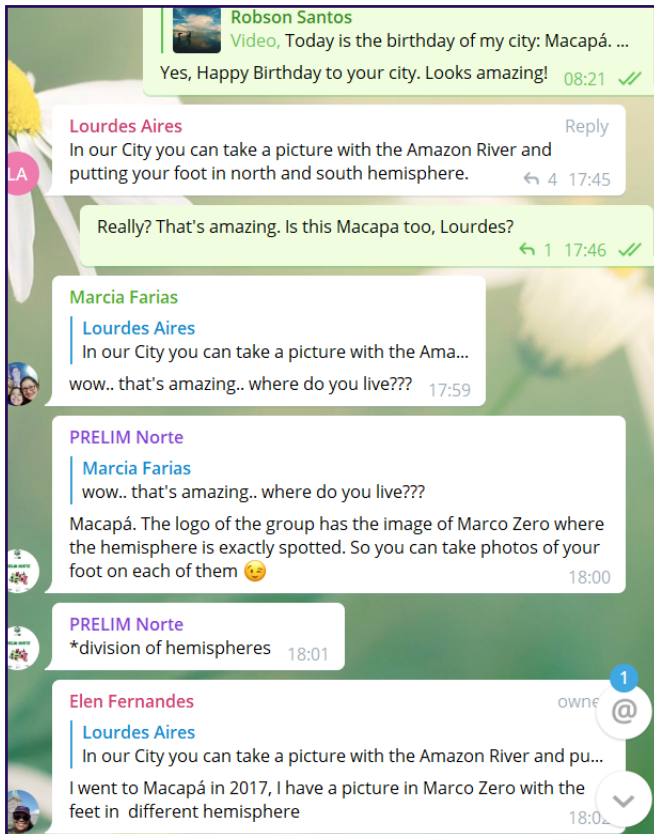


Figure 7: hometowns

The tutor then shared a photo of a similar idea, but at the north of Denmark (where the North Sea and Baltic Sea are different colours).

We saw photos of towns, tourist attractions, the sea, parks ... and tattoos!

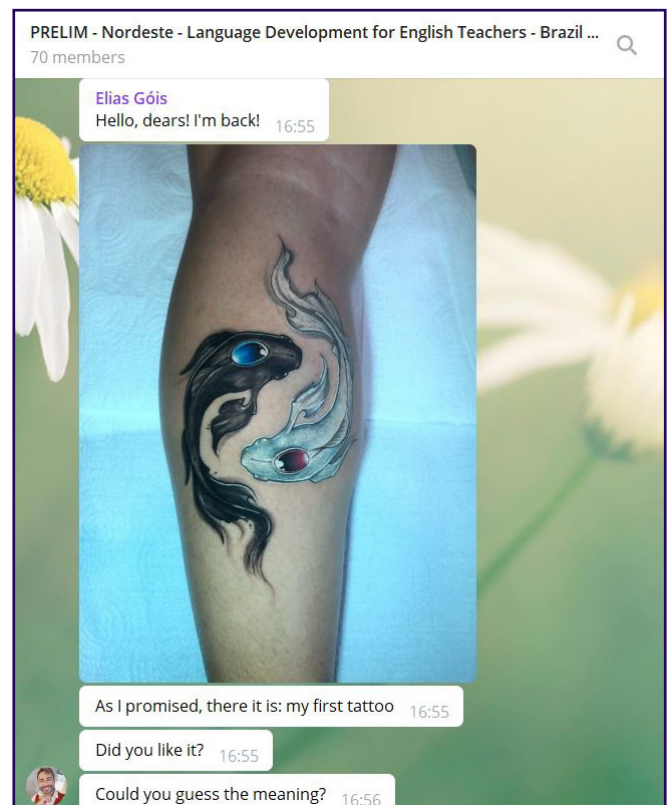
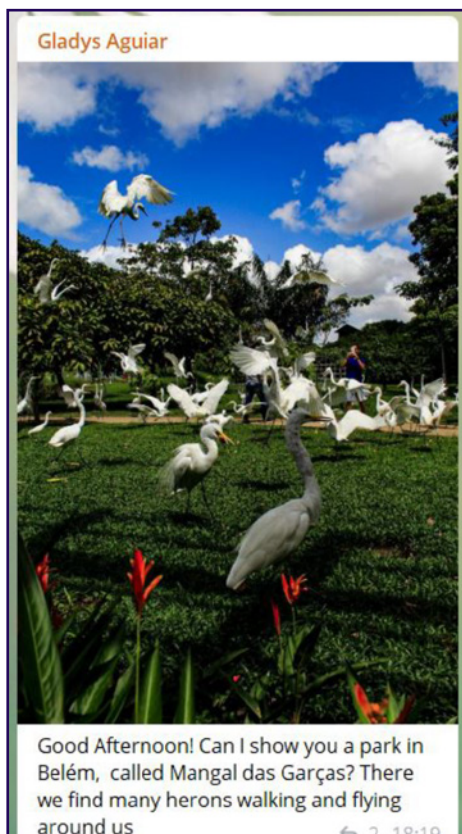


Figure 8: towns, tourism and tattoos

And during our extra Carnival Zoom class we wore hats.

Figure 9: carnival hats



The star was Guilanna (above right) who made her hat especially for the class and shared on Telegram the story behind it, 'Naia and the Moon'. We learned a lot about each other's culture.

d/ Teachers shared homework in written form, audio and video. We were prepared for some resistance but there was little/none. Teachers enthusiastically shared their work and showed great creativity.

Two written examples from the North group:

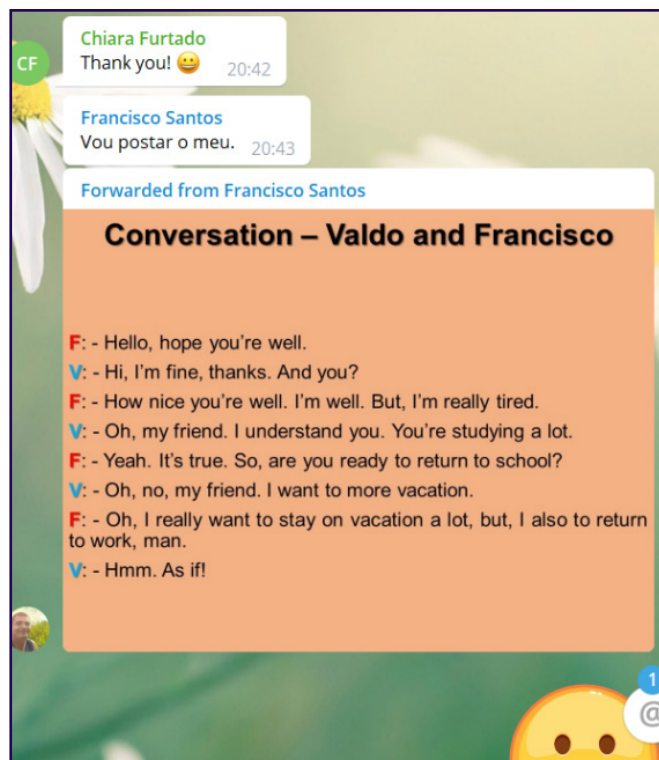
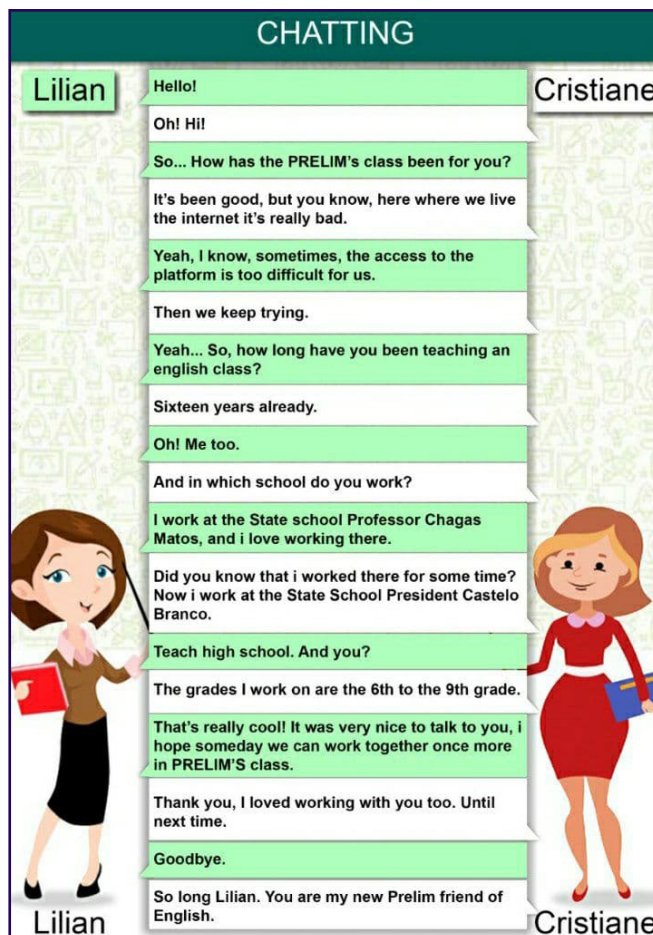


Figure 10: homework



Audio chat example from the North group:
 Videos from the PRELIM south region:



Figure 11: examples of chat

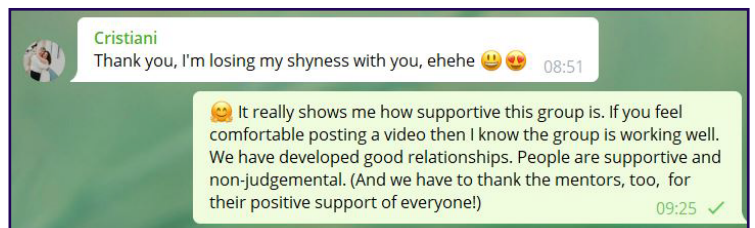
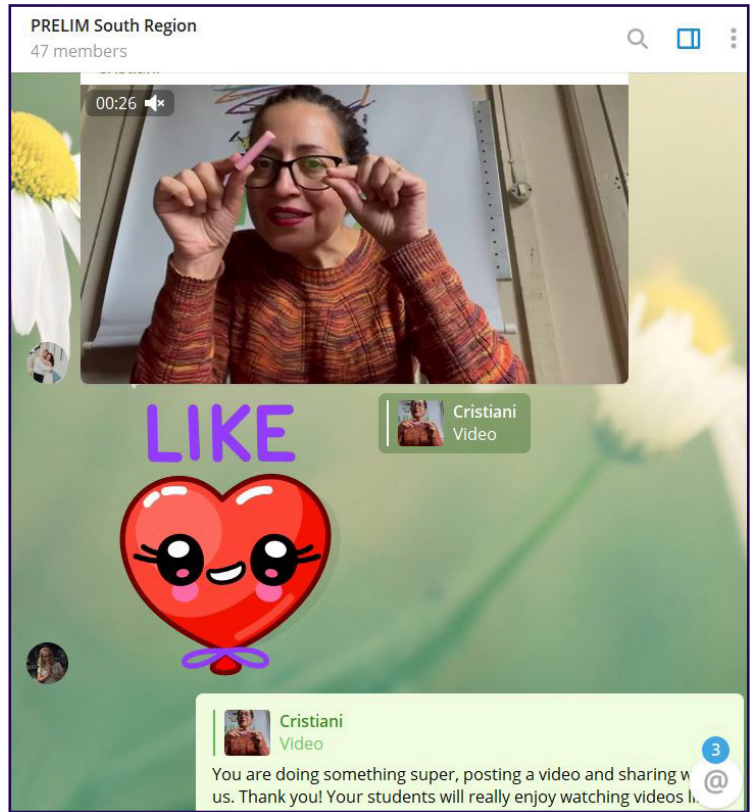


Figure 12: examples of videos

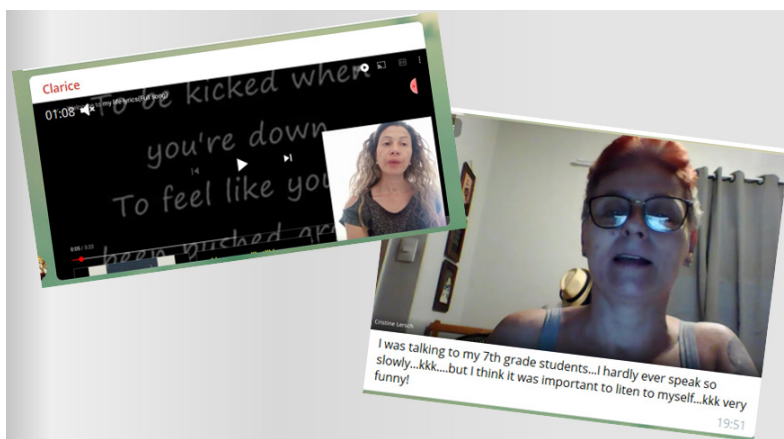
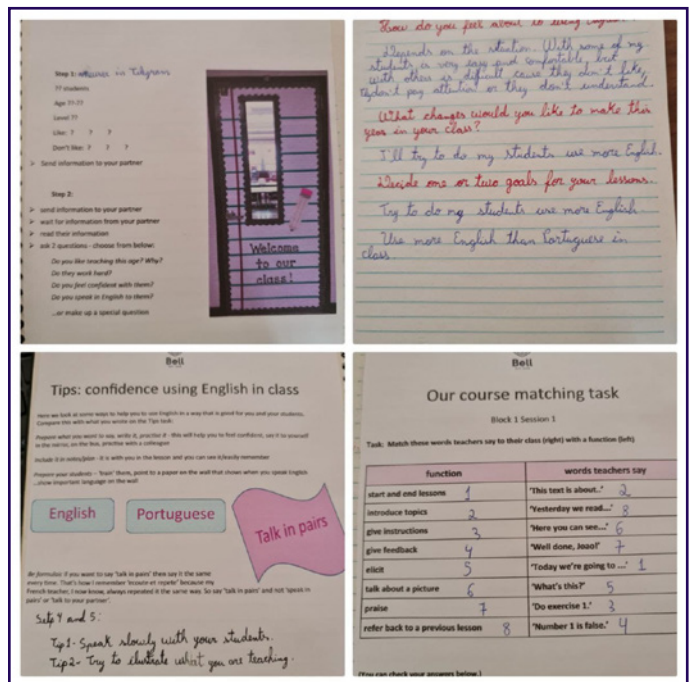
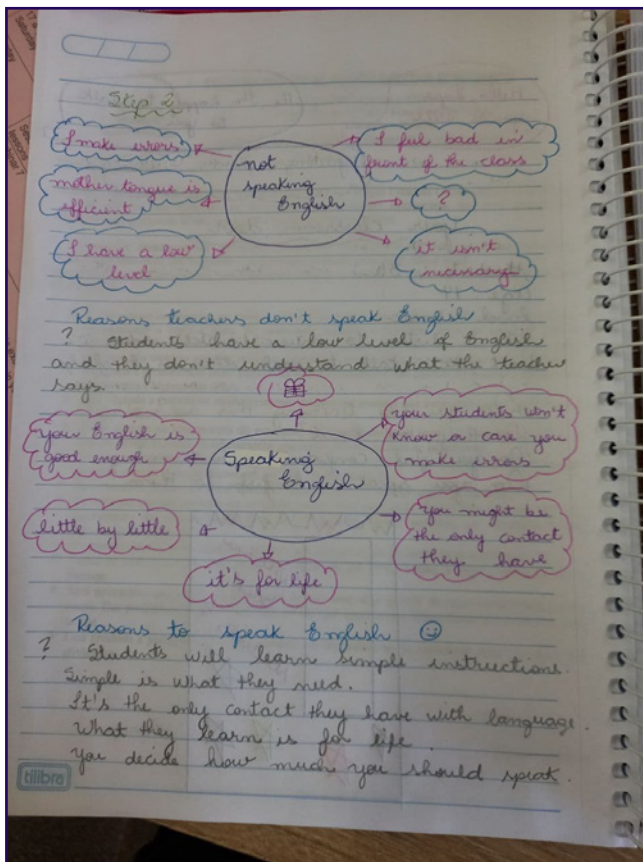


Figure 13: slide template

(Slide template from www.SLIDEMANIA.com)

There was a lot of participant-led communication and learning. For example, they (unprompted) started sharing photographs of their notebooks.

Figure 14: examples of course notebooks



step 4



- Does Garfield love sleeping?
- Do you have a cat?
- Is Garfield lazy?
- Does Garfield have a special bed?
- How many cats/dogs do you have?
- What's the name of Garfield's owner?
- What is Garfield's favorite food?
- What is your favorite comic book?

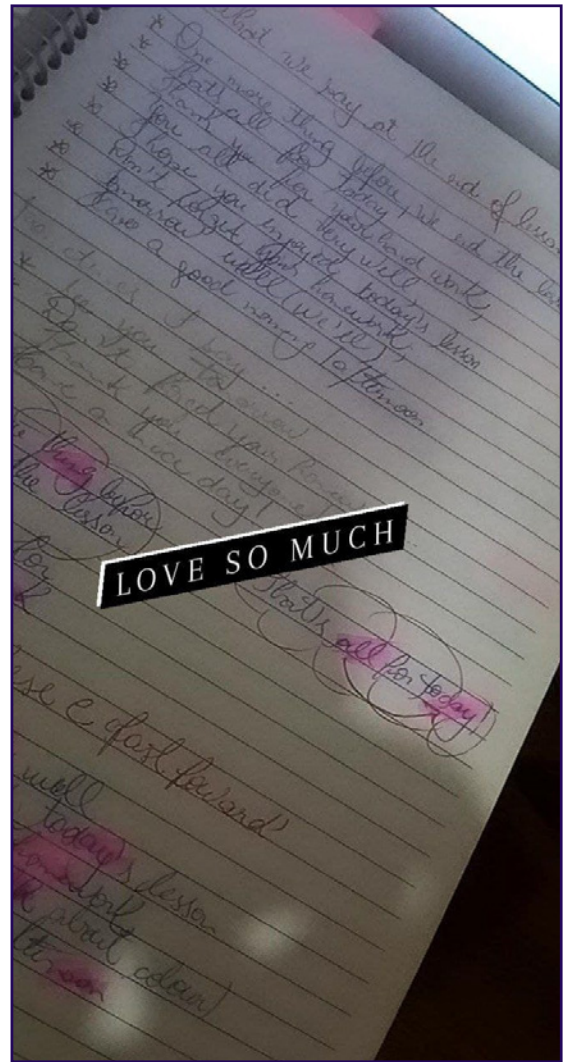
Step 5

What did you learn about asking and answering questions in English?

First it's important to teach the WH questions to the students in order to make them understand the questions.

Pictures are very important to help them create a conversation making questions.

I can use a small part of a movie to do this activity too.



e/ Mentors helped teachers and teachers helped each other.

Here is an example from the South East group. A mentor explaining an activity we did in the webinar:

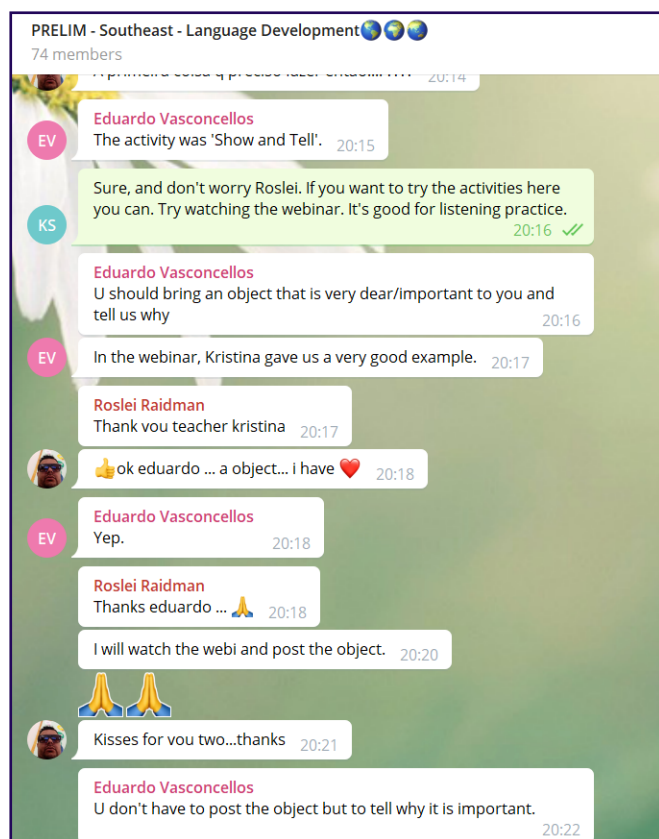
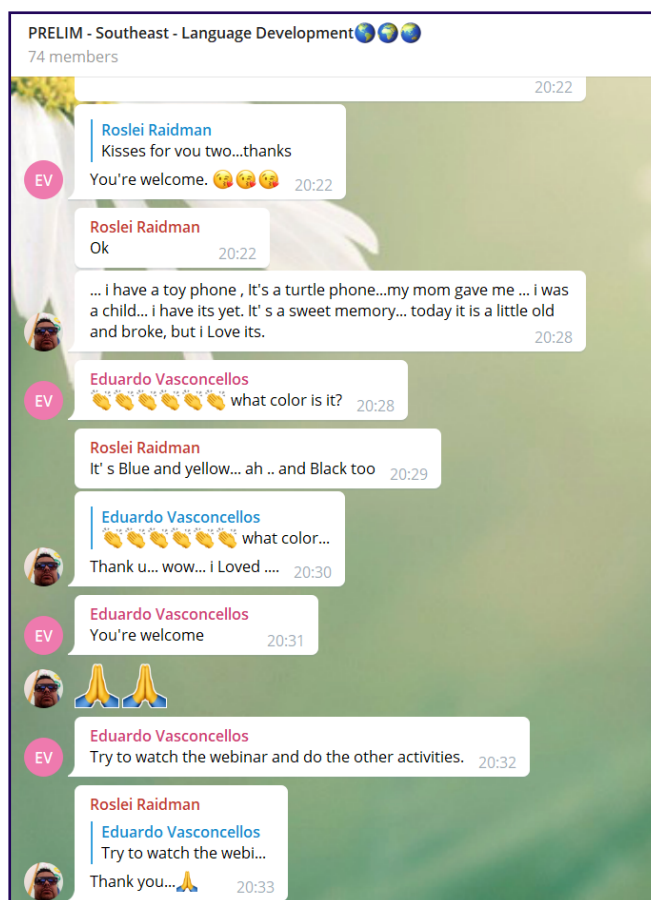


Figure 15: webinar activity explanation



f/ Teachers really did their best to get connected. A teacher in the South group contacted a tutor in Portuguese. The tutor used Google translate:

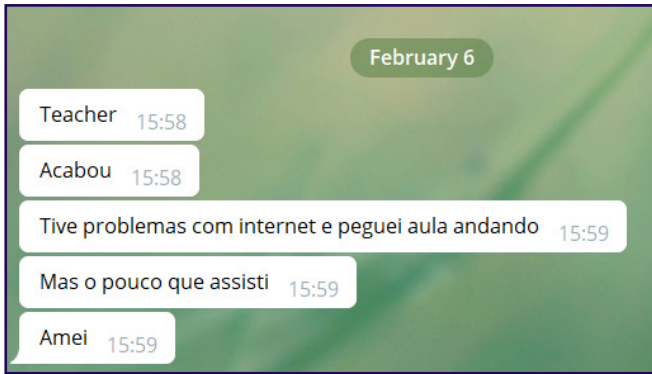


Figure 16: Google Translate

g/ Teachers gave unsolicited feedback after webinars.

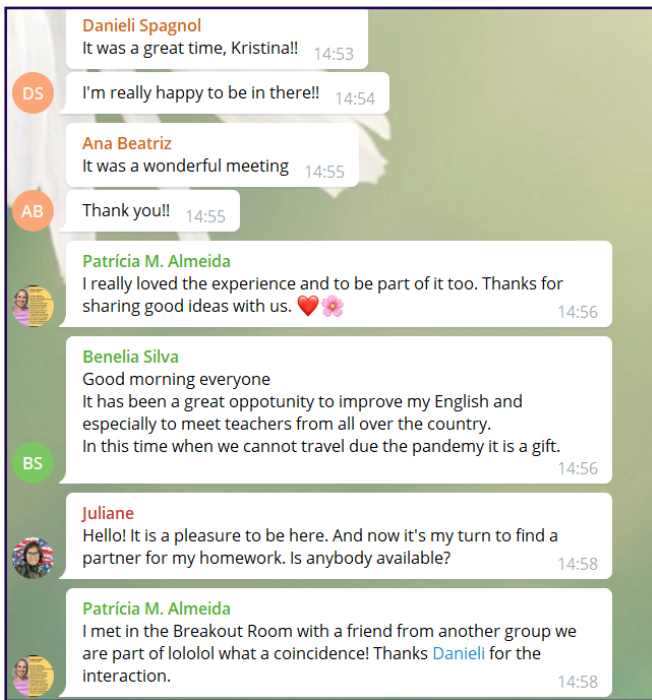


Figure 17: feedback

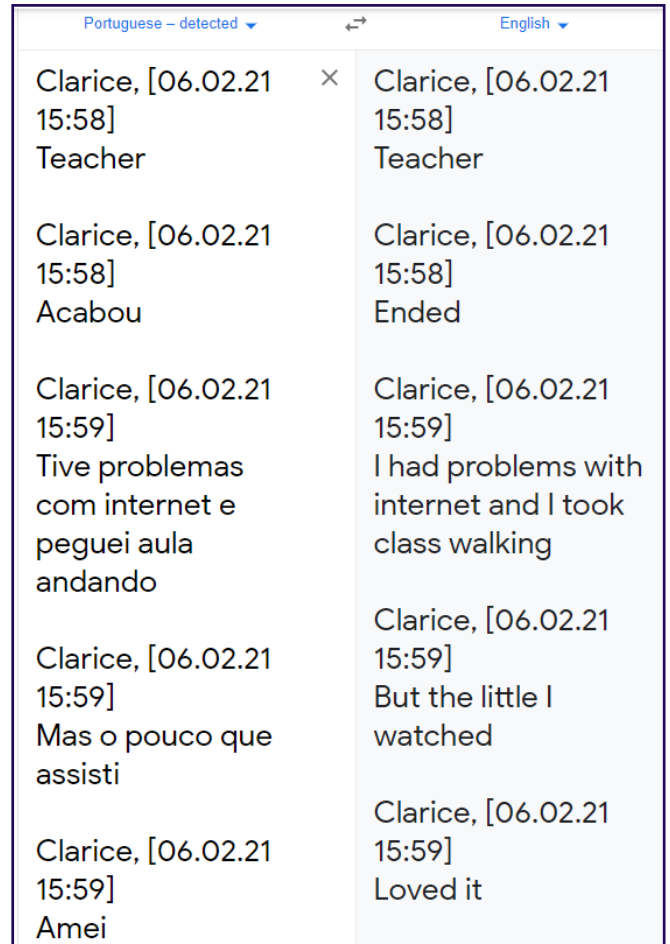




Figure 18: *more feedback*

h/ As the course progressed, it became more important to add more elements of choice and continue to enhance the democratic nature of the course, which was commented on by CPs in feedback (end of Block 1).

In the penultimate week of the course, we added more choice in the synchronous classes by letting teachers select breakout rooms (BORs) according to the topic they wanted to discuss. With more than 80 participants, it was possible to have nine topics.



Choose your own BOR - Activity 3



1. sports
2. television
3. music
4. future plans
5. shopping
6. hobbies
7. food and cooking
8. my city or my hometown
9. art and culture

Figure 19: breakout room topics

i/ In order to make the BOR discussions run smoothly we gave some ‘just-in-time’ training in active listening skills (here called internal and focused listening.) We used a flipped learning approach, asking teachers to watch a short YouTube video (with easy English and transcript) before coming to the webinar. We reviewed in Portuguese and English the idea of listening without thinking about your own response and then went into BORs to practise.

Teachers gave positive feedback and said they would use the materials with their own (high school) students.


j/ The CPs really appreciated the visit in the final webinar by Roy Cross (British Council) and Sergio Monteiro (First Vice-President of BRAZ-TESOL). This gave them external validation after the effort they put into the course.

At the end of the course, we were all sad to leave the final webinar. There were tears, lots of goodbyes and many messages afterwards on social media saying ‘thank you’ for the opportunity to take the PRELIM course.

Tipos de “listening”

Listening interno
 Nós vamos pensar sobre o que nós vamos dizer...
 ‘Eu sei o que essa pessoa vai dizer.’
 OU ‘Eu fiz isso antes e tenho outra atividade para compartilhar.’

Listening focado
 Nós paramos de pensar sobre o que vamos falar em seguida.
 Nós fazemos um esforço para focar nas palavras da outra pessoa. Para realmente ouvir o que eles estão compartilhando.




<https://youtu.be/rzsVh8YwZEO>

Types of listening

Internal listening
 We are thinking about what we are going to say next...
 ‘I know what this person is going to say.’
 OR ‘I did this before and I have another activity to share.’

Focused listening
 We stop thinking about what we are going to say next.
 We make an effort to focus on the other person’s words. To really hear what they are sharing.



<https://youtu.be/rzsVh8YwZEO>

Figure 20: listening activities

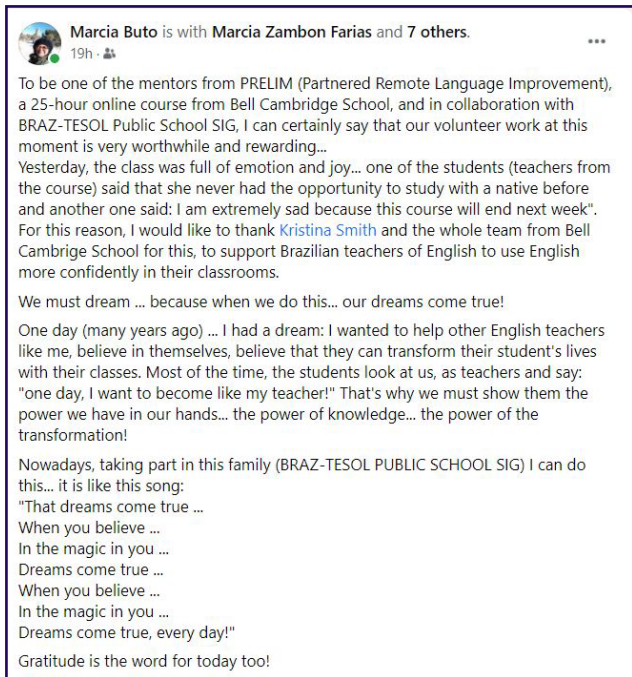


Figure 21: example farewell message

Learning points:

- There was a very clear appreciation by participants of the integration of classroom methodology (both planned and opportunistic) into the language content. It is clear that any language improvement course aimed at teachers cannot and should not be detached from methodology – both aspects reinforce and strengthen the other. For example, despite the language focus of the asynchronous course materials, methodology naturally would come up in the Zoom classes when we modelled speaking activities. It made sense to explain the rationale behind how we were staging the speaking activities on Zoom. We recommend methodology is more formally covered in courses of this type.

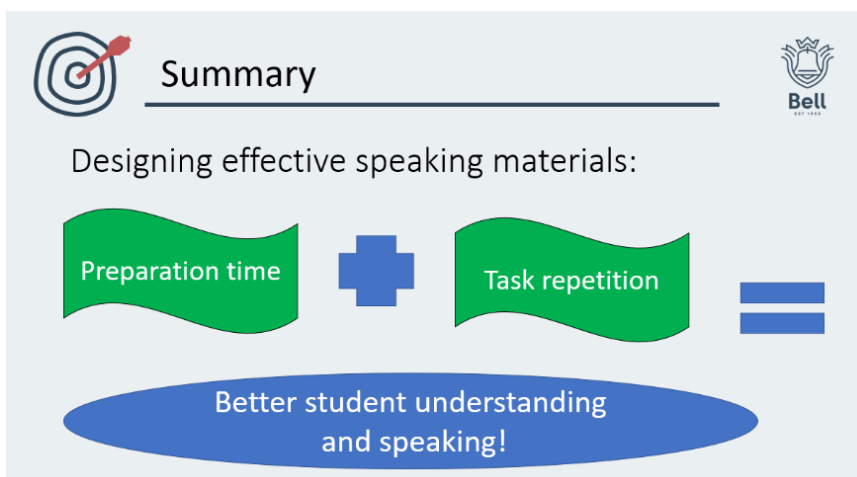


Figure 22: methodology

- The week-long break between blocks proved highly useful and was appreciated by both tutors and participants as a way to take a rest and catch up on and absorb what had been learned. We recommend building in breaks in any future course of this nature.
- Holding two iterations of each webinar (Wed, PM and Saturday AM) allowed more teachers to join live and increased engagement
- We recommend splitting webinar recordings and uploading them as short chunks to facilitate access for teachers with low bandwidth
- The optional Carnival webinar was very popular – build in flexibility to hold events like this according to the local calendar
- Make space for social media interaction between tutors and participants and encourage it to build trust and rapport; build this into course planning

Feedback and assessment

- There was an ethos of encouraging language use, without undue concern for accuracy. We deliberately did not do any error correction or focus on grammar ‘mistakes’. The focus was entirely on fluency. Consequently, teachers threw themselves into the course and used whatever English they had.
- There were no quizzes or tests
- We administered a mid-course and a post-course questionnaire, which allowed us to measure participants’ reported confidence regarding the course objectives (see course impact section and Appendices A and B)
- We shared a summary of the results of the mid-course questionnaire with CPs (to their surprise). This helped with engagement and also teachers reported that sharing lesson feedback with their students was something they could try themselves.
- Course completion was assessed by BRAZ-TESOL, taking into account webinar attendance and course contributions

Learning points:

- The inclusive, non-judgemental ethos worked very successfully in a Brazilian context and we suspect this lay behind such high course involvement and completion rates
- It was hard to keep track of who and how many were participating and when without an LMS
- Feedback questionnaires and the contributions on Telegram/Facebook provide a valuable trove of authentic English language use by Portuguese speakers, which we can make use of in future courses
- The lack of grading and tests was a little confusing for teachers at first, although they were fine with it once the course rationale was explained to them. It is important to be explicit from the outset about the objectives of the course and how these will be achieved and measured.

5. Course outcomes

The overwhelming impression gained by the tutors and mentors from both Bell and BRAZ-TESOL was that the course had a very positive impact on the participants. This is supported by the collected data, which is summarised below:

Survey data

As part of our mid- and end-of-course questionnaires we gave the participants a list of ‘can do’ statements based on course content, which they scored out of 10 to represent their level of confidence (1 being ‘not confident at all’, 10 being ‘very confident’). We gave the same statements in each questionnaire, so any changes in confidence could be measured. Below are the results (based on between 100 and 120 responses in each survey). The first four statements are coloured in blue as these topics had already been covered at the time of the mid-course questionnaire and hence you would expect less change.

While baseline levels were already quite high, it is pleasing to note an overall increase in confidence scores across all areas as a result of the course.

	Mid course average	End of course average	Change
1. I can describe (descrever) my classroom and students in English	8.8	9.3	0.5
2. I can use important terms (palavras-chave) for teaching in English	8.9	9.2	0.3
3. I can use English to start and finish lessons (começar e terminar aulas)	9	9.5	0.5
4. I can use English to introduce new topics (introduzir novos tópicos)	8.9	9.3	0.4
5. I can give instructions (dar instruções) in English	8.5	9.3	0.8
6. I can ask questions (fazer perguntas / tirar dúvidas) in English	8.3	9	0.7
7. I can use elicit (provocar) answers in English	7.9	8.8	0.9
8. I can tell stories (contar histórias) in English	7.2	8.4	1.2
9. I can teach large classes (ensinar para turmas grandes) in English	7.6	8.7	1.1
10. I can give feedback (comentar nas atividades dos alunos, ou seja, dar um feedback nas atividades deles) in English.	8.1	8.9	0.8
11. I can manage the classroom (gestão ou gerenciamento de sala de aula) in English.	7.7	8.7	1.0
12. I can refer back to previous lessons (retomar lições anteriores) in English.	7.1	9	1.9

Figure 23: learner outcomes

The positive impact felt by the participants is reflected in the course recommendation rate, which was 99 per cent (from 115 responses).

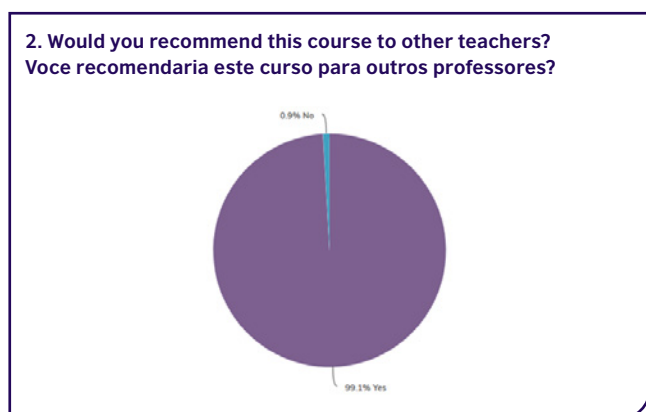


Figure 24: participant satisfaction

Qualitative data:

Here is a summary of commonly recurring themes from our open survey questions.

Teachers found the following useful:

- Opportunities to speak English, especially with the Bell teachers
- Interaction with colleagues across Brazil gave them a sense of support, solidarity and allowed for sharing of ideas
- The increase in confidence in teaching English both in terms of using English and having new ideas to try in the classroom
- Hearing new external ideas from the UK and being able to work with colleagues to fit these into a local context
- The opportunity to 'be students' themselves inspired participants to view their own teaching differently and work with learners in new ways
- Learning a lot about doing online teaching (indirectly) – a salient point for many during the pandemic

Impact on BRAZ-TESOL mentors

Mentors and representatives also learned a lot. Here is a summary of their comments:

Maria Valésia and Marcia Farias BRAZTESOL representatives:

We have learned:

- *How to manage a course with 250 teachers from the five regions of Brazil*
- *Our teachers are awesome, they just need opportunities*

Mentors:

Célia – Designing a course is a challenge and it needs time

Danieli – I learned the simple can be the best!

Denise – To give our students clear instructions

Ellen – How to manage Zoom as a co-host

Everton – I learned that teacher training can be lots of fun!

Luiz Afonso – Not to be afraid of failure; that mistakes are part of the process

Marcia – As a Mentor it was rewarding to see their progress during the course

Sérgio – To be a listener as much as I could

Mariane – I have learned different ways to approach the English language with Kristina, all the amazing trainers and the great Brazilian teachers I had the privilege to meet

Organisational impact

For Bell, although we are used to working on international projects such as this, the nature of PRELIM meant our teaching and training staff had to think more deeply about, and become familiar with, many aspects of online learning which they weren't accustomed to. It provided valuable experience to our teaching and training staff, which we can utilise in future projects. It also highlighted some very obvious skills gaps with regard to educational technology use, which we hope to address in our future CPD activity!

Learning point:

- Data collection is critical for assessing impact and needs to be built into the course from the start

Appendix A – Feedback summary from mid-course questionnaire

Overall, about the course the CPs liked:

Speaking practice, especially with teachers from all over Brazil
Webinars
Breakout room activities, also rotating partners so we meet more people
Everything is step-by-step
Learn to use technology (Telegram, Facebook, Zoom, Mentimeter, etc.)
Trainers' attitudes – warm and democratic
Many teachers are supportive towards their (shy) colleagues in breakout rooms
Everyone can keep up, even if they have some limitations with language level

Self-study materials:

Materials are: useful, relevant, stimulating, innovative, good examples for us, make us feel more secure, reflect teacher's daily life, improve our vocabulary, self-explanatory, well-organised, carefully-planned
Small sentences are easy to memorise
We can understand the student's experiences learning English
Calling another teacher is useful, good practice
I'm using the strategies with students
I'm going to use the ideas/activities with students when I start teaching

Feedback about Zoom:

The best moment of the week
Dynamic, excellent tips, engaging, interactive
Opportunities to talk, interact with other teachers
I was shy but I am getting more confident
There should not be more than three people in a breakout room [Note: we tried to keep the rooms with three teachers after this feedback]
I was a little lost at the beginning, but I am improving each time
Some teachers are not 100 per cent fluent so it's harder for them

Telegram/Facebook

I like it, teachers/colleagues are very supportive
I made friends
The groups should continue after the course ends
The interaction is great. I see other people are also uncomfortable using English in class. It's helping me a lot.
It lets us talk to teachers from all across Brazil
Love it, great interaction, organised, we could use it even more (project work, for example)
We are using Facebook in a really good way

Negative:

Negative points were about internet connection problems, the way topics mix in social media platforms, the number of messages making it hard to follow, wanting help finding a partner for some activities. We prepared an answer and shared some tips.

There are big differences in language level between some Brazilian teachers. This makes it harder for some teachers to participate.

Appendix B – End-of-course feedback – qualitative data

We received hundreds of comments from participants. Here are a sample of responses to provide a flavour of the end-of-course feedback.

What did you find most useful about the course? O que você achou mais útil sobre o curso?

The interaction with other teachers around of Brazil was essential because the moments of conversation we could know each other and the same difficulties that we had the exchange of experiences help us a lot and sure we had an amazing coordinators and the incredible Kristina guiding us to acquire confidence.

... the whole course was excellent, it brought provocations and showed activities in the classroom, which allowed us to dare and lose a little fear of speaking. Today, for sure, I feel more confident and believing that everything is possible, especially speaking in English and offering students, from the public school, with excellence!

The opportunity to talk in English with other people and mainly to realise that I can understand native speakers and talk to them.

I really love all the tips about the activities, the most useful thing was learn how to adapt them in our reality, according to the situations we live.

I didn't know that I was able to feel safe in speaking English and that was what was most useful for me.

The most useful thing of all to me was to get linked with teachers from all over Brazil getting support and sharing fears in order to get better teachers. I'm happy to say I feel confident about doing these in English and I want to improve much more.

The way we connected during the separate classes; I could feel like my students feel as if I was in their shoes.

I found useful that the activities that was used to teach us, can be used to teach our students too.

This course is one of most relevant I have ever taken. It shows practical and real examples that we could use in our daily teaching. The team of teachers are amazing, they are caring, generous and committed. We felt really good. The classes were meaningful and I have already put it into practice, even though I'm still teaching remotely. The knowledge we gained in this course is everlasting.

This course was a turning point for me ... I would have liked to dedicate myself more, but it was an unforgettable experience I graduated in 2011 and since then I have not taught English ... two years ago I went back to work with English and felt ashamed because I am outdated and unable to speak small words with confidence ... this course gave me more confidence and a desire to learn than four years of college I loved the course and I am very thank you all for this opportunity.

**Did the course change your teaching in any way?
If so, how? O curso mudou seu ensino de alguma
forma? Se sim, como?**

The course made me believe in myself again and continue believe that teaching of English Language is important and I can overcome all the difficulties.

Yes, now I try to use more English in my classes.

Yes, the course made me see new work options.

I'm feeling confident for speak and listen. I'm so glad, because it was possible understand all teacher from this course.

I am used to have modern technology in my classes, but not to the extent we have to do now in the pandemic. After this course, I feel confident enough to start a new school year and to apply this new approach and techniques.

Yes, now I am speaking more English with my students.

Yes, I used teach much grammar but now I have new ideas I loved and learned new ways to work with my students using more English in classroom.

Yes, it did. I've never thought about how important it is to give students time to prepare for the activities.

Tenho mais confiança em usa a língua inglesa nas aulas (I have more confidence in using English in the classroom).

Yes, now I can more confident with my English classes especially remote. I learn other ways to do my classes too. I'm other teacher ... better than before.

Yes, it made me think about some details I didn't use to pay attention, like how to start and finish the class, which words are important ... Giving clear instructions is essential ...

Appendix C: Future plans

As per the British Council's recommendation (Roy Cross), here is our proposal for a possible follow-up course.

The follow-up would be a more substantial course in two stages:

Stage 1. Training for mentor teachers

Aim: Develop the skills needed to prepare and run similar language (and methodology) courses in Brazil, in the different regions or across the whole country.

Offer 20 places per region for a total of 100 CPs maximum.

Module A: Four weeks – Zoom, basics of presenting and assisting other presenters, facilitating online meetings, troubleshooting technical issues, increasing interaction (BORs, integrating other media and websites). Hands-on practice so they can take a more active role in running the live classes.

Module B: Four weeks – elements of course design and preparing materials – how to create materials for asynchronous learning including video, using other web tools such as mentimeter, whiteboard.fi, flipgrid, etc. to expand the kind of media teachers can share easily and to give them some practice with digital tools, which they requested.

Module C: Four weeks – organising a course (registration, onboarding, admin, social media, feedback mechanisms (questionnaires, focus groups, etc.), ending a course, admin around certificates and reports.

With two-week breaks in between modules

By the end of the course some new materials will be available for the next PRELIM course designed by Brazilians for Brazilians, to replace or augment the existing materials (or to create a new level of course alongside experienced Bell material writers). They would also have prepared the next iteration of the PRELIM course.

Stage 2:

Run a second iteration of the PRELIM course with a new cohort of public school English teachers (level A2–B1 again). Brazilian mentor teachers to take turns working on aspects of the course delivery.

The exact timing and format of the course to be decided by the mentor teachers and Bell team. For example, Google classroom could be an alternative, as it would be easier to track which teachers are completing the work. Short lesson materials and activities could be pushed out on Telegram groups to take more advantage of mobile learning/cell phones, which all the CPs had.

Brazilian mentors would develop skills, get hands-on experience and gain confidence in running teacher development courses.

This training model could be adjusted and repeated with other groups.

Future ‘wants’ expressed by teachers in course questionnaires could be considered as possible additions to the course and areas for the mentor teachers to develop a lesson around:

- Use music and film clip
- Teach some grammar points that are difficult, like present perfect
- Teach some idioms
- Give us materials targeted at students
- Give us texts with audio, or websites with links
- Help us with methodology
- Correct our mistakes
- Help us with planning a lesson
- Speaking activities for large classes

The Facebook group and Telegram groups still exist. We plan to run a webinar once a month so teachers can continue to practise speaking English. One format might be to work in lesson planning in BORs. The Public School SIG is planning to run webinars to build on the first PRELIM course.

Cuba

Project background

1. Description of the partners

The English Language Teaching section of the Cuban Association of Pedagogues (APC-ELI)

The APC-ELI is a relatively new Cuban teachers' association. It was opened on 13 May 2013, and has held four national conferences since its official opening. It has an estimated enrolment of 580 members in the whole country. Most of the members work in tertiary education and the majority are female teachers. Since its opening, the APC-ELI has provided opportunities for the professional development of members and non-members through face-to-face workshops, webinars, online conferences and contests. The association publishes a quarterly newsletter and is present on different social media, such as Facebook, Google and Telegram.

International House Bristol

This is a private language school, established in 1987, with a core team of around nine full-time English teachers/academic managers and around 12 administrative/ancillary staff, offering the following relevant provision:

- General, exam (IELTS, Cambridge main suite, OET) and specialist English courses for adults
- General and specialist English courses for juniors (8–12s and 13–17-year-olds)
- Teacher training (CELTA, courses for foreign teachers of English in the summer, CLIL)

Clients include groups, schools in the UK and abroad and individuals, with IH Bristol's specialisations including English courses for juniors and teacher training at all levels. The school offers face-to-face, hybrid and online courses, usually using Zoom and Microsoft Teams.

2. Key features of the context

Course participant (CP) profile:

- 39 female and nine male
- 33 primary and 15 secondary
- 13 CPs based in Havana, six in Granma Province, 11 in Guantanamo, 15 in Pina del Rio Province and three elsewhere

Other key contextual features:

- Young English teachers in the provinces and more remote areas receive fewer opportunities for professional development
- Many CPs had never done any online courses for professional development before
- Access to the internet is more reliable in larger cities than in rural areas and is very expensive for most users, with 2 to 4GB, depending on 3G or 4G access, costing around ten to 12 per cent of a teacher's monthly salary
- Many Cuban teachers have smartphones with low video streaming performance, older operating systems and/or limited access to communication apps

¹ IH Bristol's partner English Teaching Association (ETA), APC-ELI, and the teachers who taught on the PRELIM course were consulted for this report and their contributions have been included.

3. Outline of the course and rationale

The goal of the course was to provide a development opportunity for young teachers in the most remote areas and in the provinces, where professional development is harder to access.

CPs reported in needs analysis that it was important for them to improve in all four English skills, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. There were, however, slight preferences for prioritising speaking, listening and pronunciation on the PRELIM Course. Almost all CPs expressed a preference for as much error correction as possible.

As a result, IH Bristol decided that its PRELIM course would be a general English course, with widespread coverage of skills and systems, but with an increased focus on speaking, listening, pronunciation and vocabulary. This necessitated the use of a synchronous platform for online sessions and Google Meet was chosen, with WhatsApp, which was already familiar to CPs, as the non-synchronous platform for communication and resources sharing.

Self-assessment and IH Bristol's placement test determined that there should be four different classes and levels: nine CPs at CEFR level A2; 16 at A2+; 13 at B1; and ten at B2.

Needs analysis revealed that CPs wanted around 100 minutes of synchronous classes and asynchronous homework each week. However, because of the cost of internet access, it was calculated that the PRELIM Connectivity Fund's internet allocation to CPs would be best divided up into 4.5 hours of synchronous sessions (45 minutes every one or two weeks) and 12 hours of asynchronous homework. The major asynchronous element was designed to ensure that CPs with synchronous access problems would still be able to benefit from the course.

Project findings

1. Working in partnership

Planning

IH Bristol and APC-ELI consulted successfully on many elements of planning, including the needs analysis survey, an agreed platform, meeting times, course participation agreement and criteria for receiving course certificates.

Because of their goal to focus the PRELIM course on young teachers in the provinces, APC-ELI were under considerable time constraints for recruiting and selecting CPs, which required consultation with provincial coordinators and college officials.

There was slippage in the planning schedule and this could have been mitigated by IH Bristol negotiating a planning schedule with APC-ELI, finding out about APC-ELI's planning constraints, dividing up data-collection responsibilities and agreeing on communication protocols, such as the most suitable means of communication and response times for correspondence.

Key learning points

1. APC-ELI's engagement helped IH Bristol better understand the local context and needs, and was key to enhancing CPs' participation throughout the course
2. Drawing up an agreed planning schedule with the ETA, understanding their planning constraints in more depth and agreeing on communication protocols are key elements in successful planning of such collaborative projects
3. The use of a framework such as SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) to analyse the context of the project with APC-ELI might have captured earlier the major issue of internet access costs and the specific IT expertise available in APC-ELI, which IH Bristol could have exploited in the planning process

2. Working within the CoP

The expertise of the NILE-managed CoP provided very effective support to IH Bristol and other UK partners. Collaboration was encouraged through the sharing of project outlines to capture key aspects of individual projects. Timely online meetings for key elements in the project cycle were run, providing valuable opportunities for partners to share good – and realistic – practice, support each other, establish priorities and generate creative ideas. As such, they were one of the highlights of the PRELIM experience. The CoP also supported partners by providing pathways for fulfilling project and regulatory requirements, such as reporting and participation agreements, in the form of template documents, reminders and strategy suggestions.

Key learning points

1. Proactive participation in CoP interactions, particularly early online meetings, is highly beneficial in building the community and trust required for online collaboration on a complex and potentially stressful project such as PRELIM
2. Early awareness of project requirements and strategies for data-gathering, together with template tools, is extremely useful for the fulfilment of these project requirements. In one-to-one meetings NILE consultants provided encouragement, strategy advice and an external perspective to help reconcile competing project priorities.
3. Advice and advocacy through the CoP can help individual projects manage their processes within time and resource constraints

3. Designing/delivering the course

Course design

(See **Appendix 1** for the course programme)

The design of the course was highly responsive to the needs of the CPs. The course was topic-based, using topics identified as being of interest to CPs in the needs analysis. Analysis of language use in the online sessions and writing assignments informed the choice of homework activities. This approach meant that the materials and activities were appropriate, motivating and chosen in response to CPs' needs. Error correction was also based on issues identified in sessions and writing.

Many homework and online session activities were designed to be adaptable to secondary and primary contexts and there was some methodology reflection in the higher two groups. Materials came from a wide range of published course and resource book sources, while others were written by the course tutors. CPs found this material diversity stimulating and they responded well to the writing assignments, producing some very personal and committed writing.

IH Bristol's previous experiences with online-only and blended courses meant that they understood the risk of low CP engagement due to lack of human-to-human interactivity. They were able to minimise this by planning for robust interaction in the four class WhatsApp groups, particularly in the first month of the course. This asynchronous communication in the weeks between lessons helped engagement and motivation to flourish as CPs shared and responded to accounts of their interests and lives. It also became a more valuable source of learning, as CPs were able to reflect on their answers and participate with more confidence and less dominance by stronger colleagues.

The online learning platform and connectivity

The Cuban PRELIM project had limited choice in synchronous meeting platforms because of their restricted availability in Cuba. However, the chosen platform, Google Meet, met the needs of the course: it provided access to up to 16 CPs, had breakout room facilities and a screen presentation tool. APC-ELI had used it successfully before, so the coordinators had some knowledge of its use.

Test meetings revealed challenges with breakout room functionality, with some CPs dropping their connection to the meeting. As a result, IH Bristol found technical adjustments and strategies to reduce bandwidth. Possible strategies to identify these issues earlier on are detailed in the key learning points below.

Early online sessions identified gaps in CPs' knowledge of how to access and operate Google Meet, in which many CPs struggled with features of the software such as sending chat messages and muting and unmuting themselves. In response, APC-ELI's IT specialist provided short video tutorials on these tools, which helped improve active participation within them.

APC-ELI's coordinators fielded a large number of CP issues and questions about accessing and managing online sessions around the time of the sessions. CPs also used personal know-how to assist each other with IT issues through practical suggestions on WhatsApp. For those who could not access online sessions, recordings were posted on Vimeo for them to watch. The recordings were also viewed by those who had accessed the sessions, for revision purposes.

The British Council Cuba provided the funds for CPs to obtain internet access for the entire duration of the Course. Some CPs used up their internet allocation early and so a suggested strategy is found in key learning point 7 below.

Key learning points

1. The responsiveness planned into course design produced engagement and some committed written responses from the CPs able to attend regularly
2. Test meetings were extremely valuable in identifying IT issues
3. Having IT support available to CPs around the time of online sessions and afterwards to resolve platform connection and operation issues improves course uptake
4. CPs should be encouraged to use their internet allocation to support each other with IT problems and IT how-to guides should be provided to CPs well in advance of first meetings
5. Testing of the synchronous platform with CPs should be carried out as far in advance of the course as possible to identify its working limitations and the level of user knowledge. This could have been done earlier with CPs who had volunteered to be part of a mini-focus group.
6. Detailed questions about CPs' smartphone operating systems, 3G/4G access and internet costs should be included in needs analysis
7. Financial support for the PRELIM Connectivity Fund from the British Council Cuba was essential in making this project possible. Internet Connectivity Fund grants should be made to CPs in three tranches, not one, to minimise over-use.

4. Course outcomes

Platforms and engagement

With 72 per cent of CPs aged 30 or under and 73 per cent based outside Havana, the course offered a new form of language training and professional development for young teachers with very few resources in rural and remote areas of Cuba. Some CPs demonstrated considerable commitment to the course, buying new phones in order to attend online sessions or coming down from their school or house in the mountains to an area with connectivity.

39 of the 48 registered CPs participated on the course and there was a good engagement from CPs with the early asynchronous WhatsApp ice-breaker tasks, although engagement tended to reduce from those who could not access the online sessions. Nevertheless, around half completed the course, with the remainder participating significantly. With more emphasis in pre-course information on the value of asynchronous homework and session recordings, early engagement may have been sustained. Another factor to consider here is APC-ELI reported that a number of CPs were not released from their teaching duties to attend the Course, so this might have been influential.

Out of 17 respondents who completed the end-of-course survey, 59 per cent managed to watch 80 to 100 per cent of the session recordings and only 12 per cent were not able to watch any recordings. They managed to access an average of 79 per cent of the set homework and complete an average of 73 per cent of it. In addition to the language benefits, homework also increased CPs' knowledge of UK culture and activities to run with their own students.

English language confidence

A comparison of CPs' perceptions of their confidence in their English skills and knowledge for teaching before and after the course shows a clear increase:

Exploring the classroom	Needs analysis before the Course (32 respondents)	End-of-course survey (17 respondents)
Confidence in English skills and knowledge for teaching (from 1 to 10; 10=the highest)	7.2	8.65

This improvement in confidence is even more marked in the 17 end-of-course survey responses to these key questions:

How much has the PRELIM Course increased your confidence in your English?

18 per cent: confidence in their English increased a little

47 per cent: confidence in their English increased quite a lot

35 per cent: confidence in their English increased very much

After doing the PRELIM course, how much more English will you use in class with your students?

12 per cent: a little more English

53 per cent: quite a lot more English

35 per cent: much more English

CPs' comments about the live sessions and recordings showed they appreciated the chance to listen to native speakers' pronunciation and be corrected on their own. They also valued the opportunity to practise speaking and listening to a native speaker and with each other, and they acquired some ideas for activities to run in class with their students. Criticisms of the course were minimal and almost all focused on internet/IT issues and the limited number of online sessions.

CPs were particularly interested in collocations and seemed to have relatively little awareness of this language feature in the early sessions. The most effective classroom techniques at lower levels were eliciting using the chat box, functional language frames and error correction. At higher levels, while error correction and functional language also elicited a good deal of interest, speaking activities in breakout rooms, where possible, were particularly effective.

Capacity-building

The Cuban PRELIM course has given IH Bristol and its teachers invaluable experience in planning, delivering, monitoring and reporting on an online course in a particularly complex and challenging context, using both synchronous and asynchronous tools. It has helped the school understand how to successfully engage and cooperate with a partner organisation in the form of APC-ELI. In turn, the APC-ELI coordinators said that they 'learned a great deal about managing and organising online training and served as liaison between the producers of the course and the recipients.'

Key learning points

1. The Cuban PRELIM course has demonstrated that it is possible to deliver effective professional development online to Cuban teachers in rural and remote areas, with tangible benefits for their confidence in their English and their use of English in the classroom
2. APC-ELI's engagement helped IH Bristol better understand the local context and needs, and was key to enhancing CPs' participation throughout the course
3. Drawing up an agreed planning schedule with the English Teacher Association, understanding their planning constraints in more depth and agreeing on communication protocols are key elements in successful planning of such collaborative projects
4. Proactive participation in CoP interactions, particularly early online meetings, is highly beneficial in building the community and trust required for online collaboration on a complex project such as PRELIM
5. Testing of the online platform with CPs should be carried out as far in advance of the course as possible to identify its working limitations and the level of user knowledge
6. Financial support for the PRELIM Connectivity Fund from the British Council Cuba was essential in making this project possible

Appendix 1: PRELIM course programme

Unit and topic	Online session or homework	Speaking/ pronunciation	Listening	Reading	Writing	Vocabulary/ functional	Grammar	Other
Unit 1 (10/2/21) Food and diet	Online session (45m)	Yes				Yes		
	homework (180m)				Yes	Yes	Yes-some groups	Baseline survey and ice-breaker activities
Unit 2 (24/2/21) Music/ Entertainment	Online session (45m)	Yes				Yes		
	homework (180m)		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Error correction
Unit 3 (10/3/21) Culture	Online session (45m)	Yes				Yes		
	homework (180m)					Yes		
Unit 4 (24/3/21) Travel	Online session (45m)	Yes				Yes		
	homework (90m)		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Unit 5 (31/3/21) Sport and leisure	Online session (45m)	Yes				Yes		
	homework (90m)			Yes	Yes (action plan)	Yes		
Unit 6 (7/4/21) Course review	Online session (45m)	Yes						

Other elements featuring on the course:

1. Reflection on participants' own classroom practice (the frequency and complexity of this reflection will depend on the level of the group)
2. Error correction: this will typically follow written work and will also be present, where practical with time and technology, in online sessions

Please note:

1. There are four groups divided into four levels: elementary (A2), pre-intermediate (A2+), intermediate (B1) and upper-intermediate (B2).

2. The above programme provides an example of the distribution of language skills and systems work for each unit; ultimately, the exact content and distribution of skills/systems will be determined by tutors according to the level, needs and interests of their group and possible IT constraints.
3. While the course is a general English programme, needs analysis highlighted participants' interest in speaking/listening practice and pronunciation/vocabulary development, so these will feature slightly more in the course.

Honduras

Project background

1. Description of the partners

Lewis School of English was established in 1976 and is based in Southampton, UK. As well as its adult school and junior offerings, Lewis Teacher Training Centre runs an initial teaching qualification course and has designed and delivered a range of methodology courses, both face-to-face and online.

HELTA TESOL was established in 2014 and is based in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. It is a professional English teacher association focusing on promoting the professional development of teachers in the public sector in the country. Its mission is to ensure teachers have access to the latest methodological and pedagogical trends.

2. Key features of the context

Online CPD delivery poses challenges to Honduran teachers due to the accessibility of high bandwidth internet and access to it from low income, rural areas. These challenges have been exacerbated lately due to the pandemic and two hurricanes, ETA and IOTA, which struck the country in November 2020.

Out of the total of 250 applications, 48 were selected and 36 completed the course. 83 per cent were female and 17 per cent male, teaching at the elementary level.

During the process of working with the course participants (CPs) it was important to understand that they all came from different contexts, backgrounds and even teaching majors. Some were not specifically English teachers but had been assigned this subject.

3. Outline of the course and rationale

Due to the time difference between the UK and Honduras and potential connectivity issues in rural areas, we thought the course should consist of one synchronous session per week followed by a number of asynchronous tasks that CPs could complete in their own time. The synchronous sessions would be a means of introducing the Target Language (TL) and the asynchronous tasks would provide opportunities to practise using it.

In a pre-course survey, CPs were asked about their familiarity with and confidence using a range of online platforms. The results showed that WhatsApp, Facebook and Zoom were popular choices. We felt it was important to use technology CPs were familiar with to help with motivation and retention. We chose to use Zoom for the live sessions, Facebook units/guides to upload recordings of lessons and provide links to the asynchronous tasks, and WhatsApp for general communication and some of the weekly tasks.

The key aim was to provide a space for teachers to improve their proficiency skills through a programme that provided the specific skills and tools needed to deliver lessons in English to their learners, as well as improve the CPs' confidence in their use of English in the classroom. The pre-course survey asked CPs what percentage of English was used in their lessons; 70 per cent said between 0 per cent and 25 per cent (Figure 1).

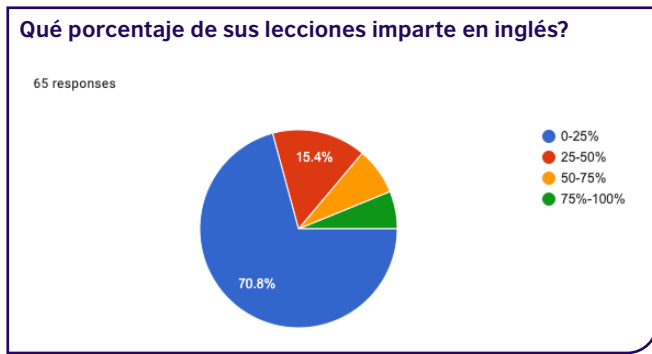


Figure 1: The percentage of English used in CPs lessons

In terms of course design, this meant we chose to focus on TL that could be easily and immediately applied in their lessons. We put together a ten-week modular course (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Overview of the ten modules

Week	Focus	TL
1	Lexis development	Classroom collocations
2		Dependent prepositions
3	Functional language	Giving praise and encouragement
4		Giving instructions
5		Eliciting questions
6	Grammar focus	Modal verbs for classroom rules
7		Question forming
8		Comparatives to talk about Britain and Honduras
9	Culture	Describing traditions and culture
10	Review and action planning	Action planning

CPs completed a pre-course level test and were then split into 6 classes ranging from A1 to B1 level. All classes followed the same course outline, but with the TL graded appropriately.

Project findings

1. Working in partnership – reported by Lewis School and HELTA

It quickly became apparent that close collaboration between the UK school and the English Teachers Association (ETA) would be key to a successful project. In terms of the selection process, HELTA's invaluable insight into the context of CPs meant that they could effectively target those who would benefit from the intended outcomes of the course. HELTA was instrumental in designing a staged registration process that meant the chosen participants understood the purpose of the course and were committed.

From a practical point of view, we knew that most communication would need to be in the CPs' mother tongue (L1) given their low level of English; this led to a combined effort to produce the documentation and instructions in both English and Spanish. Similarly, HELTA were ever present in the class WhatsApp groups, where many CPs – particularly in the beginning – were asking for clarification in their L1.

All parts of the process involved discussion and combined input from Lewis School and HELTA, from the language level test to the welcome email, monitoring of attendance and mid- and post-course feedback. We established clear roles; HELTA followed up with participants who had low attendance or connectivity issues; Lewis School focused on course delivery and task completion. This process of co-design was extremely relevant throughout the whole partnership, as it allowed both Lewis School and HELTA to have clarity on expectations and activities to complete. Additionally, Lewis school understood the clear strength of HELTA in understanding the context and provided the needed input to tailor work that would be directly beneficial to the participants and address their needs and interests.

The programme was delivered and completed within the agreed timeframe; it was a well-established partnership.

To summarise:

- There should be clear communication between the ETA and the UK school at the start of the project in order to fully understand the context of the CPs and the impact on course design
- The UK school needs to be flexible and responsive, as circumstances may change at the design stage and during the course itself
- Roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined from the outset
- Regular feedback on attendance and task completion will allow the ETA to follow up with CPs and establish reasons for absence, as well as offer CPs further support if necessary
- Realistic timeframes should be established and agreed for each stage of the process

2. Working within the CoP – reported by Lewis School

This was our first time working within a community of practice (CoP) of this nature, and we had originally anticipated that the purpose would be to regularly check on the progress of each project and ensure that objectives and deadlines were being met. However, it quickly became apparent that the CoP in fact provided those UK schools involved in the PRELIM project with an opportunity to collaborate and share ideas in regular and meaningful ways. We quickly learned that each school had a unique approach, and that although comparisons were helpful, they could not be a measure of what we thought would work within the context of our partner, HELTA, and the CPs.

As well as being used for more anecdotal exchanges, Slack was also a forum for directly asking for support in specific areas, such as how to get around particular technical issues. It was also extremely helpful to be told about upcoming webinars and reading materials on topics that were relevant.

There was a huge amount of value in the tips shared among members of the CoP, such as how to format WhatsApp messages to make them a more engaging means of communication. This was passed on to the Lewis School teachers and was immediately put into practice (Figure 3).

We also felt encouraged to pass on any of our own discoveries. An example of this was that in creating our Facebook groups for the CPs, we learnt of the 'Social Learning Units' setting, which enables you to create modules of content that can be ordered and organised.

As a school, we felt the CoP helped maintain momentum and provide reassurance throughout the project.

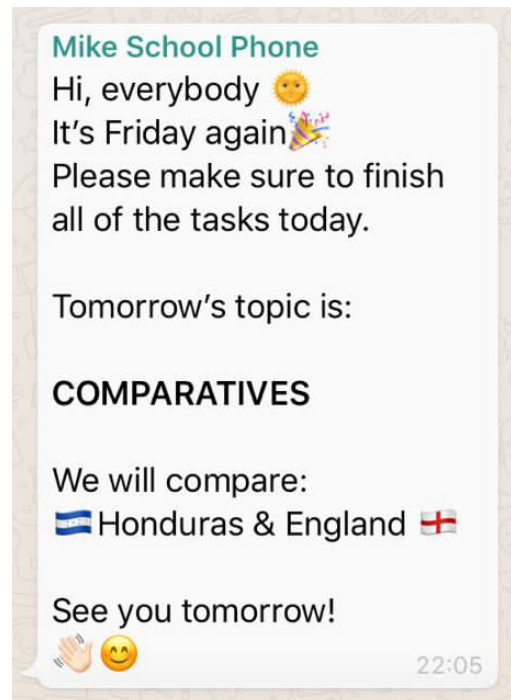


Figure 3: Example message to CPs

3. Working with the CPs – reported by HELTA

The selected course participants were highly motivated and excited to be part of this first ever experience in Honduras. Most of the work HELTA has done was related to continuous professional development for the purpose of improvement of pedagogical skills and increasing methodological knowledge of language teaching. Usually this is seen by teachers as a benefit for them, but ultimately it is a benefit for their learners. This experience for them meant a genuine interest in their professional growth by allowing CPs to enhance their proficiency skills not only for the purpose of teaching, but to increase their confidence and improve their use of the language for other purposes.

For HELTA, it was important to maintain contact through the WhatsApp group chats, but also individually, so many conversations were held off chat to ensure support, clarity on the work and activities expected, provide information related to connecting and even special needs related to devices to be used for connecting to the synchronous lessons. This process of individual communication allowed us to differentiate our support and meet the needs of CPs as needed, and allowed the development of a relationship of trust and commitment.

The majority of the participants were active in synchronous meetings, especially those with higher proficiency levels; however, those unable to connect due to connectivity or health issues worked on making-up tasks during the week. Participants were responsive to the chat groups and emails, as well as to surveys.

7. Designing/delivering the course

Having decided on a modular ten-week course, there was a discussion with the Lewis School teachers about how to structure these modules. As this style of learning was likely to be a completely new experience for the CPs, it was agreed that the format should remain the same each week so that they would know what was expected of them in the asynchronous tasks. This proved to be a good decision, as it took a few weeks for some of the task types to be entirely understood.

We also wanted to make sure that there was a variety of skills work covered each week, as well as an opportunity for reflection. To achieve this, each module consisted of six tasks: a language-focused task to check understanding of the TL; a listening task to hear the TL in context; a reading task to see the TL in context; a pronunciation task; a collaborative task to encourage CPs to use the TL together; and a reflection task to consider how useful this language was and how CPs planned to implement it in their lessons (Figure 4).

As we had evidence from the registration process that the CPs could easily access and use Google Forms, four of the six weekly tasks used the same format. WhatsApp was then used for the collaborative and pronunciation tasks, as this enabled the use of videos and smaller chat groups.

Weekly meetings were held with Lewis School teachers to share ideas and materials, as well as to record the audio materials. This gave them the opportunity to give regular feedback on how the classes were progressing. In addition to this, we gathered mid- and post-course feedback from CPs.

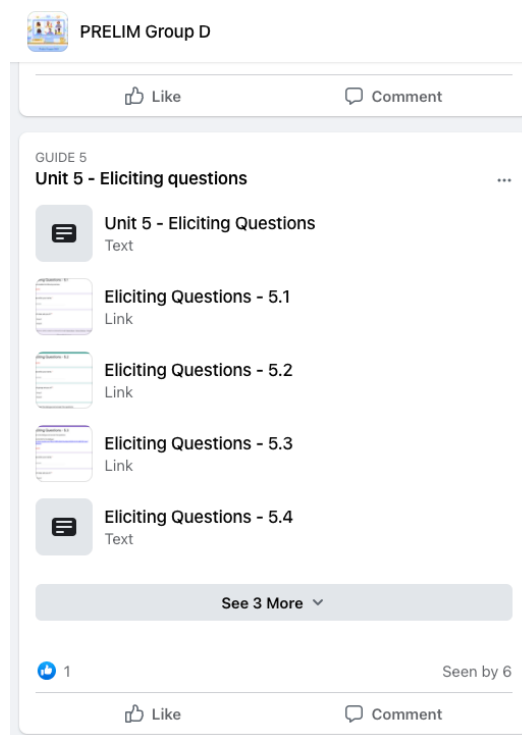


Figure 4: A Facebook group module

4. Course outcomes

Reported by Lewis School

It was satisfying to see that 79 per cent of CPs completed the course with regular attendance and task completion. We saw an increase in participation when teachers made use of WhatsApp with weekly reminders, videos and informal exchanges, and, for an online course of this nature, we would encourage use of these communication channels to help to build relationships and motivate CPs.

Teachers said that they felt the majority of their students had shown signs of increased confidence using English. In the first live sessions, many were reluctant to contribute and resorted to Spanish with each other. In contrast, in the final group farewell session (*Figure 5*), where all six classes came together, many were keen to leave goodbye messages in English.

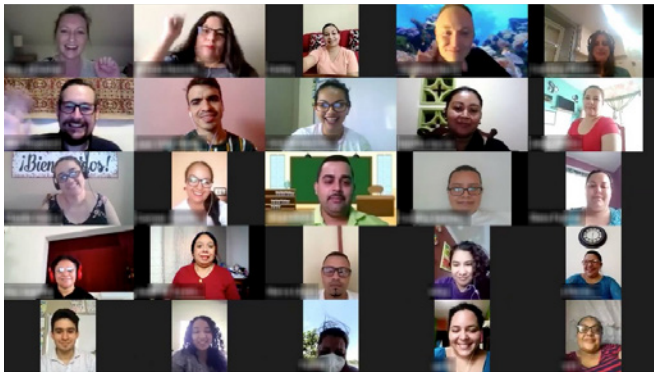


Figure 5: Final group farewell session

The teachers' perception of increased confidence was confirmed in the post-course survey, where CPs were asked on a scale of 1–5 how much they felt their confidence had increased (1 being nothing, 5 being a lot). 55 per cent and 33 per cent of respondents chose 5 and 4 on the scale respectively.

Reassuringly, 100 per cent of respondents said that the content was very relevant, reinforcing the need to focus on bite-sized chunks of language that are immediately applicable within their context, seemingly impacting positively on their confidence in doing so.

Another positive outcome is that it transpired that a number of CPs created their own WhatsApp groups to support each other. This CoP of their own making will allow for continued collaboration beyond the course itself, providing them with longer-term support and friendships.

The three Lewis School teachers found the experience to be a challenging but rewarding one. It gave them the opportunity to be heavily involved in the course design stage, and pushed them to be creative, working together to find solutions to shared problems. Our conclusion is that with this increased responsibility, the teachers are more invested, not only in the process, but in the outcomes. It also gives them an opportunity to truly work as a team, rather than as individuals within the same department.

Reported by HELTA

From HELTA's perspective, we believe this has been an important process to start and that we would like to continue. We strongly believe the course outcomes were met and it went beyond the improvement of English proficiency into building a community of practice where teachers felt they were valued and that there was a genuine interest in their learning, their improvement as professionals and their growth in their careers as educators.

Key learning points

This project has been a rewarding one to be involved in, and one which HELTA, Lewis School, the CPs and teachers have found to be an extremely positive experience. It is also one that we can learn from in a number of ways.

Induction materials

As mentioned earlier, a lot of support was given to CPs in terms of clarification of tasks in their L1. This is perhaps unsurprising, given the fact that the mode of delivery and task types were unfamiliar to the majority and their level of English was low. For future projects of this kind, we would recommend including induction videos in both English and the CPs' L1, which clearly explain the format of the course and demonstrate the online tools used. We believe this would reduce the amount of individual support then needed.

Sustainability of course content

Having designed a course that is bespoke to the context of our CPs, it would be of great value to be able to hand this over to the ETA for future use. This does need careful thought in terms of how and where the online tasks are hosted. Materials created on the UK school's platform are not easy to hand over to a third party, and so it may be advisable to create a shared platform for the purpose of the project.

Rapport and motivation

The use of WhatsApp was key to creating rapport within the groups, not only between teachers and CPs, but among the CPs themselves. This more informal channel of communication led to instant and responsive interactions, peer support and low-pressure opportunities to practise using English. It was also an opportunity for cultural exchanges, as our teachers indirectly gained insights into life in Honduras, and the CPs learned about our teachers' UK experiences (*Figure 6*).

This collaboration has been a great learning opportunity for all involved, and one that we hope will be the first step in a longstanding relationship.

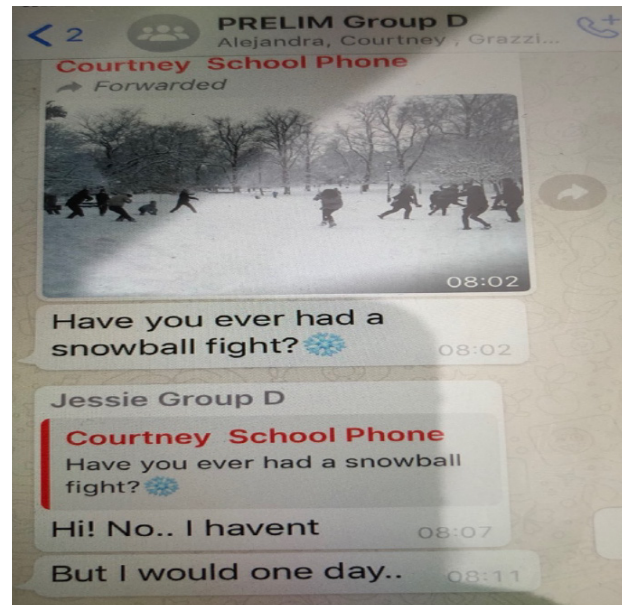


Figure 6: WhatsApp exchange

Nicaragua

Project background

1. Description of project partners:

This project is a collaboration between Anglia Ruskin University Language Centre (ARU) and Asociación Nicaragüense de Profesores de Inglés (ANPI).

- Anglia Ruskin University has a student body of over 39,000, from 177 different countries. The Language Centre is accredited by the British Council with up to 15 staff working on provision. ARU specialises in providing Academic English, EAP and ESP programmes, exam-based courses, CLIL programmes and a range of teacher training including CELTA and specialist teacher development for language teachers.
- ANPI is the nationally recognised English Teaching Association in Nicaragua, with around 1,200 registered members, and aims to promote the skills and professional development of language teachers nationally and in collaboration with other organisations.
- The programme was arranged by ARU and ANPI with some logistical support from The Ministry of Education of Nicaragua (MINED). This government department employs all course participants (CPs) for the project.

2. Key features of the context:

i. Course participants

English teaching of primary age students in Nicaragua is generally done via two job roles:

- Docentes de Inglés de Educación de Primaria Regular ('conventional' primary teachers who teach primary level children of one age but multiple subjects)
- Maestros de Inglés de Educación Multigrado (multi-grade teachers whose classes will include students across several year groups)

The cohort consisted of 317 Primaria Regular teachers and 100 Multigrado teachers (417 participants in total).

- The cohort was spread geographically across Nicaragua, with participants coming from 17 Departments and 42 Districts.
 - 39 participants were from Managua, the capital city
 - 82 participants were from towns/cities of 150,000+ population
 - The majority, approx. 296, were from smaller towns, villages and rural communities

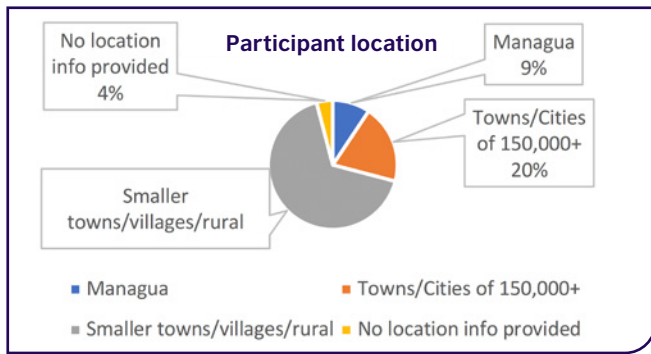


Figure 1: location

- The gender split identified slightly higher numbers of female CPs at 52 per cent. The average age of participants was 32.

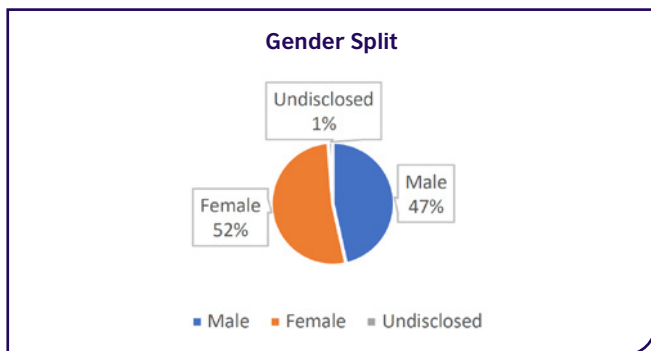


Figure 2: gender

ii. Teaching situation

Teaching hours in Nicaraguan Primary schools are typically from 8am–2pm local time and many teachers have long travel times to their place of work. Classroom set up is typically formal, with desks in rows with class sizes of 30–40 pupils. Use of technology varies depending on the geographical location of the teachers. Computers and televisions in classrooms are rare, and many rural communities do not have much internet connectivity. Participants had to travel to regional MINED offices to use their computers to participate in the synchronous online classes.

iii. Language levels

A report on the language levels of participants was provided by MINED. Reported language levels place the majority of teachers at A2 or B1.

- Given the scope of course and number of CPs, it was not possible to do an oral test but tutor feedback on live sessions suggested participants at A1 level for the speaking skill were more numerous than stated, and a significant number of participants were producing spoken English at B2 level.

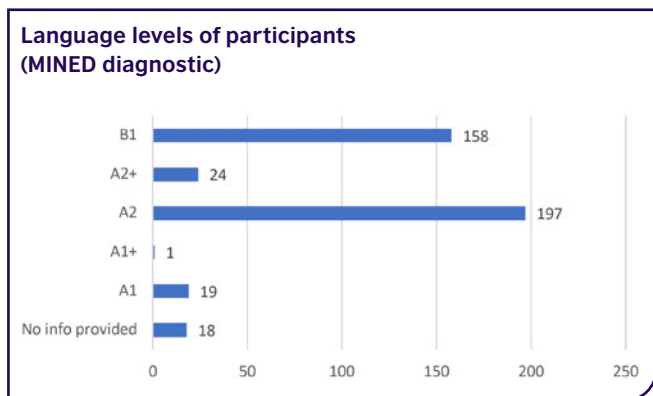


Figure 3: participant language level

3. Outline of the course and rationale (as in the project outline):

i. Course content

ANPI highlighted an appetite for professional development and greater understanding of British culture alongside language skills, so the course design aimed to integrate these aspects while addressing language needs (see Appendix 1). Thus, three strands were included:

- Language focus:** the four skills were addressed with grammar and pronunciation tasks integrated through authentic texts and audio-visual materials. Topics were aligned to those used in primary education to provide the language and confidence required to address these areas in English and support other areas of learning.
- An intercultural strand** with a focus on English as global rather than British English plus input and materials covering British culture.
- An ‘English for teaching’ strand** utilising the language from each module and developing language tools for teachers, including teaching terminology and classroom language (instruction, praise, questioning and elicitation tools, etc.) with a reflection element allowing teachers to share good practice using the new language.

Each module contained diagnostic and end-of-module assessments plus initial and end-of-module self-reported assessment of confidence.

ii. Course platform

Course provision required the content to be delivered asynchronously and synchronously. Asynchronous content was provided on **Edmodo**. This included written text, audio-visual content, audio slides/presentations, polls, quizzes and opportunities for CPs to add comments or questions.

Live sessions were also provided using **Webex**. These occurred daily over a month: given the size of cohort each CP was invited to participate in two of the live sessions two weeks’ apart. Each daily live session focused more heavily on speaking, listening and pronunciation with some reflection on professional development and exchange of ideas. The live sessions were recorded for those not attending on the day to watch independently.

The participants were grouped for the live sessions and these same groups were retained for **WhatsApp** groups. The purpose of the groups was to foster a well-integrated local community of practice. CPs were encouraged to share ideas, written or recorded production of language and to communicate about tasks for peer feedback. Each group had a designated group leader tasked with facilitating discussion and regularly selecting productive samples from set tasks to forward for tutor feedback.

Project findings

1. Working in partnership

Early meetings allowed us to outline the scope and focus of training and indicate the possible options in relation to the context and potential participants. We recommend extensive scoping meetings to enable a detailed and appropriate design plan. For example, a greater focus on cultural content was included in this project than first envisaged in response to the discussions and this strand proved successful with participants.

- Key Learning Point (KLP): detailed joint scoping allows adjustments to be made according to local context while also managing expectations and recognising the constraints and limitations of delivery

We also recommend a flexible design approach is prioritised for similar projects: in our case, adjustments and re-design were required in response to a number of factors (e.g. the length and density of project changed following a significant hurricane event in Nicaragua plus term dates and national holidays impacted the availability of CPs and their access to technology; adjustments to course materials were also made in the light of output and feedback from CPs).

- KLP: the modular nature of the design allowed us to manage and adapt content effectively in response to these factors, so this kind of design flexibility is a beneficial factor in such projects

Facilitating the logistical requirements required contact with MINED. Their engagement with the project, plans and approach allowed us to onboard a large number of participants successfully. Detailed CP lists were supplied by MINED and appropriate arrangements made to allow CPs to attend live sessions.

- KLP: engagement by relevant educational authorities is therefore considered a significant bonus, when possible, in ensuring that such projects are viable

Working within the CoP

The CoP allowed for significant sharing of pedagogical, technological and logistical expertise and a forum for the positive development of projects. Moderators/organisers were appropriately collegiate, positive and supportive, which is key in building the community successfully. Given the later starting time of our project it was helpful to follow the discussions by those already engaged in delivery but more problematic to contribute meaningfully since we had not reached the same stages. Therefore, the live sessions were motivating and provided an excellent forum for discussion and sharing ideas, especially when working in smaller groups. Alongside this, guidance and discussion with moderators and individual update meetings allowed for a more tailored focus within the community and we felt added value to the process whatever the stage of each project.

- KLP: multiple ways of working and communicating add value for all participants

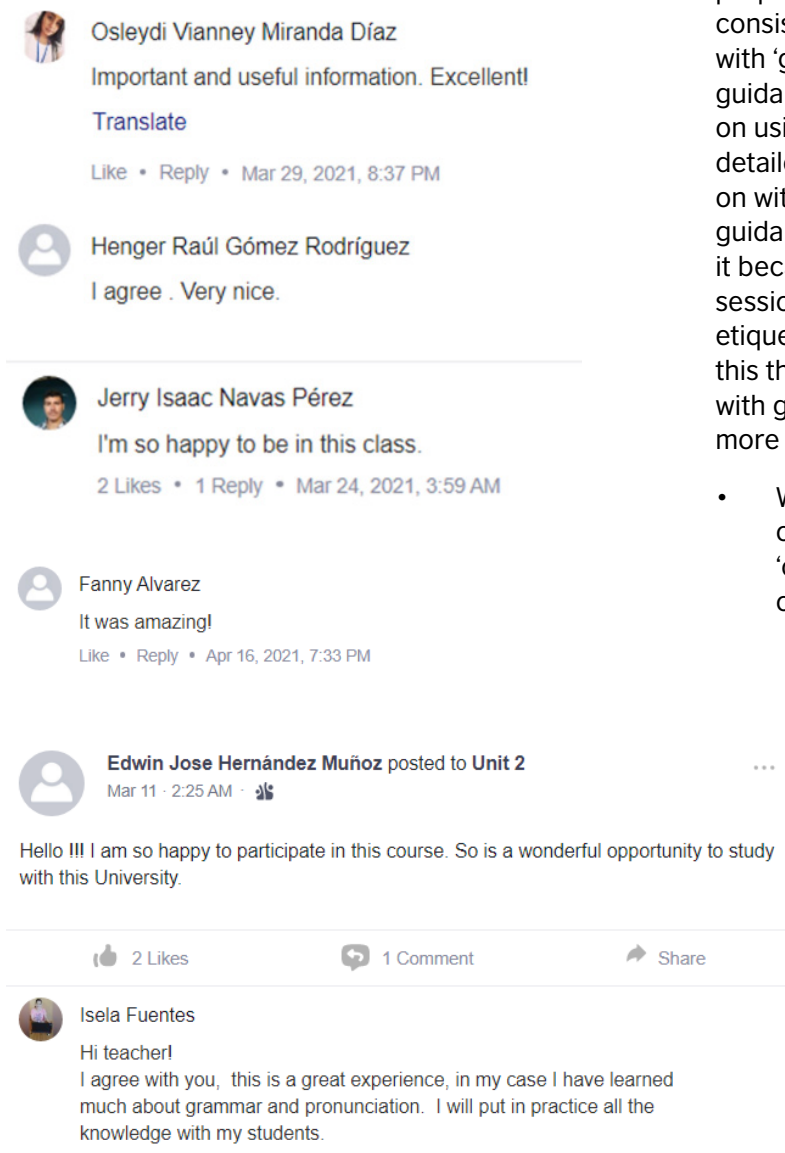
The organisation and management of the CoP online platform was both practical and valuable: shared communications on design plans, equipment and relevant resources were especially useful. These forums informed project development and allowed all those in the CoP to explore a greater variety of options and ideas.

The organisation of communications into categories/channels on the platform was particularly helpful in orienting to relevant information; for similar projects we would prioritise keeping such channels but potentially amalgamating one or two would allow information to be streamlined while adding an additional channel (#links) would enable quick access to key linked information, e.g. to Zoom meetings, Google docs and so on.

2. Working with the CPs

Participation levels were healthy: 404 of the registered accounts actively engaged with Edmodo content, though this became less consistent as school term began. However, it was acknowledged at planning stage that not all participants would have the time capacity to complete all online tasks but select those they found most useful. The lowest attendance at any live class was 92 per cent, so these were well attended.

Overall comments demonstrated positive engagement and motivation, including on the teaching platforms, with evidence of a perceived improvement in confidence and language knowledge. MINED also commented that the feedback has been excellent (further examples are included in Appendix 2).



The screenshot shows a series of user comments on Edmodo. The first comment is from Osleydi Vianney Miranda Díaz, dated Mar 29, 2021, at 8:37 PM, stating 'Important and useful information. Excellent!' and 'Translate'. The second is from Henger Raúl Gómez Rodríguez, dated Mar 24, 2021, at 3:59 AM, saying 'I agree . Very nice.'. The third is from Jerry Isaac Navas Pérez, dated Mar 24, 2021, at 3:59 AM, saying 'I'm so happy to be in this class.' with 2 likes and 1 reply. The fourth is from Fanny Alvarez, dated Apr 16, 2021, at 7:33 PM, saying 'It was amazing!'. The fifth is a post by Edwin Jose Hernández Muñoz on Mar 11 at 2:25 AM, saying 'Hello !!! I am so happy to participate in this course. So is a wonderful opportunity to study with this University.' with 2 likes and 1 comment. The sixth is from Isela Fuentes, saying 'Hi teacher! I agree with you, this is a great experience, in my case I have learned much about grammar and pronunciation. I will put in practice all the knowledge with my students.'

Figure 4: participant feedback

We were able to address CPs' expectations with clarifications about course approach early on. Some participants initially assumed they would receive individualised feedback on every task including those with automated marking systems and a course tailored precisely to very individual needs, which was not possible given the scope and numbers. Clear communication with CPs about the nature of the course and the number and needs of other participants ensures that expectations are realistic.

- Outlines of the nature of the course and who else participates ensures that CPs begin with a positive understanding of the scope and type of provision they will receive

For many CPs this was also their first experience of using videoconferencing for educational purposes. Teething issues were resolved through consistent communication, additional meetings with 'group leaders' and several re-circulations of guidance on use of platforms, in particular etiquettes on using the tools for learning purposes. While detailed 'how-to' information was provided early on with the expectation that CPs would require guidance on technical aspects of the platforms, it became evident in the first two or three live sessions that more input on 'online classroom etiquette' was required, and once we addressed this through L1 instruction sheets and a meeting with group leaders, the sessions worked more effectively.

- We recommend including detailed initial training on this aspect of learning to establish 'classroom' expectations, which may vary from context to context

3. Designing/delivering the course

As defined earlier, modular design was key in allowing the flexibility to manage the course content according to the levels and interests of CPs.

The size of the cohort and the disparity of levels was a challenge we addressed by offering two parallel levels for each module, indicated by group colours. The provision of two levels rather than the single A2 to B1 level we initially envisaged proved effective once we used a variety of communication methods and reiterated the information to clarify how this worked.

We also created peer groups with a 'group leader' identified in each who would facilitate and report any issues to tutors as necessary. The groups were designed to allow for peer engagement and to encourage practitioner communities that could be maintained following the formal ending of the course. Groupings were provided by MINED based on unknown factors. The group approach was effective to some degree in enabling greater self-direction and autonomy, with positive activity in WhatsApp groups and peer-to-peer communications on Edmodo.

- In future scenarios, we believe greater input from the course designer/provider in deciding groupings and the choice of group leader may be of benefit since it would allow CPs to be matched more closely according to context and approach
- The facilitator role also has potential to be formalised and provide a personal development pathway with appropriate support from the local partner and Ministry of Education

4. Course outcomes

Overall, qualitative results showed an improvement in performance by CPs with improvements of up to 40 per cent from diagnostic to end-of-unit tests. While the course was relatively short, making a meaningful measure of progress in terms of broad CEFR bands less visible, progress on specific areas of knowledge was evident in test outcomes. Nonetheless MINED reported that they believe participants had ‘improved their language skills’ and in particular they were pleased with improvements in ‘understanding International English’ and improved familiarity with British language and culture. They intend to repeat the programme content with other cohorts of teachers. Interestingly, the biggest progressions were made in the Language for teaching elements, which was an area of interest for CPs.

- We therefore suggest that where there is an appetite for cultural input and pedagogical development, language needs can also be addressed through designing courses that tap into these desires rather than using a standard ‘general English’ context

A selection of typical results are shown here with initial test scores in blue and end-of-unit test scores in orange (more examples of outcomes are included in Appendix 3).

It was also evident that self-reported confidence levels had also improved, with those who considered themselves to be struggling in particular content areas at a level of only one per cent on average by end of a unit of study (see appendix 3).

The desire to focus on some aspects of methodology was addressed successfully via reflection and a focus on language development for classroom use: consistent comments and feedback from participants cited evidence of language, activities and approaches they would use in the classroom following the course experience.

For many of these participants (whose CPD options tend to be limited once they have finished their initial teacher training) the opportunity to formally reflect on their practice and exchange ideas within a community of practice was also useful but more challenging. For example, CPs responded less positively in live feedback to content on autonomy and reflection and preferred more didactic content; comments in invitations to consider reflection and peer support suggested that self-reflection ‘isn’t useful’ and ‘training courses that is designed by a specialist’ is much better.

This concern held by CPs was addressed via invitations to share smaller ideas or experiences and these were received positively and engagement higher. There was a reluctance to share lesson plans (though this may be because those with less extensive English were anxious about this aspect of collaborative work). Further study would be required to fully understand this area.

- Where confidence in autonomy and peer development is lower, we suggest implementing a ‘small win’ approach by inviting CPs to share single ideas, activities or experiences of classroom teaching to develop a sense of community

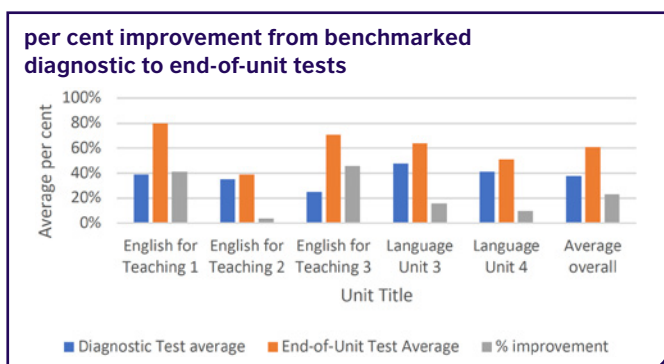


Figure 5: improvement during course

Key learning points

We summarise the key learning points as follows and make these recommendations for future projects:

- Extensive scoping meetings enable a detailed and appropriate design plan to be formulated in order to address needs of course participants within recognised constraints
- A flexible approach such as a modular design should be prioritised, for similar projects, to manage and adapt content effectively in response to potentially changing factors
- Engagement by relevant educational authorities is significantly helpful when possible
- Utilising a CoP platform to share ideas is very effective; keeping the number of channels for communication streamlined and adding a quick access 'links' channel would allow for more streamlined orientation by members of the CoP
- Circulating information about the nature and scope of the course before the start date via partners will ensure that CPs begin with a positive understanding of the type of provision they will receive
- Even if CPs have good familiarity and confidence using online platforms, providing an induction and 'how-to' worksheets about online classroom etiquette rather than just technical aspects will establish expectations and ensure smoother delivery of lessons
- Building in roles for CPs to participate as 'facilitators' and shadow some of the course provides positive opportunities for good performers and also embeds sustainability into the programme
- Better progress can be afforded where a desire for pedagogical development is exploited as a platform to also address language needs
- We suggest implementing a 'small win' approach to developing the community of practice by inviting CPs to share single ideas, activities or experiences of classroom teaching to develop their sense of community, especially where such interactions are not well established


Appendix 1: course outline


Unit	Subject	Language focus (A2+ CEFR descriptors)	English for teaching	Reflection
0	Inductions	Needs analysis Test – discrete item in English	Teaching knowledge intro	Initial reflection/fact finding (L1)
1	Family and me	Personal info – basic vocabulary review Family vocabulary Possessive adjectives Possessive 's Articles Vowel sounds	Greetings in class Classrooms – basic vocabulary Working with words	Polls and wellness check
2	Home and daily life	Present simple Adverbs of frequency Vocabulary of house and home Singular and plural nouns/spelling Consonant sounds	Imperatives Classroom instructions Use of materials to present language	Polls and wellness check
3	Food and cuisine; the world around us	Nouns – countable and uncountable Quantifiers Food/nutrition vocabulary Prepositions Geographical vocab Basic collocations Connected speech	Praising students/typical Spanish speaker errors and highlighting these Language for utilising texts	Polls and wellness check
4	Health and fitness	Present continuous (v present simple) Sports and body vocabulary Hobbies Describing likes and dislikes Typical pron errors	Autonomy and self/peer correction CPD for teachers	Reflection activities
5	Work and the world around us	Past simple and past continuous Jobs and work vocabulary Functional language – suggestions/requests	Language of assessment; use of resources	Group reflection activities
6	Travel and media	Present perfect simple Modes of transport Directions Can/could for requests Future plans	Basic lesson activities- plans Planning and resources	Final test and reflection Feedback processes


Structure of units


	Unit	Content	Platform use
		Diagnostic test Polls and self-assessment	Edmodo
A	Text focus – reading or listening	Introduce topic Includes key language	Edmodo, YouTube
B	Link to video/audio	Language in context in a film or audio	YouTube
		Quiz or activity to check new language	Edmodo
		Speaking activity – record yourself	WhatsApp/Edmodo
C	Focus on vocab	Worksheet or task	Edmodo
		Quiz or activity	Edmodo
D	Focus on grammar	Possessive pronouns and 's slide-show with voice	Edmodo
		Grammar exercises	Edmodo/online links to websites
E	Integrated language and skills	Video/audio or reading task	Link to websites/YouTube/downloadable tasks
		Writing task	Edmodo
F	Focus on pronunciation	Focus on sounds/connected speech/word and sentence stress	Online links/Edmodo
G	Review	Exit test	Edmodo


Appendix 2: Selected student feedback


 Carlos Adolfo Saravia Mercado
It was fun and interesting to read idioms about food.
[Translate](#)
Like • Reply • Apr 01, 2021, 11:26 PM

 Francis Massiel Urbina Lopez
Excellent , thanks for the information.
Like • Reply • Apr 02, 2021, 10:21 PM


 Roger Danilo Alvarado Sandoval
Thanks nice tool.
[Translate](#)
Like • Reply • Apr 03, 2021, 1:57 AM


 Carlos Alberto Salgado Sanchez
interesting Tool !!! a Big Different Dictionary
Like • Reply • Apr 03, 2021, 5:54 PM


 Rosa Elena Mercado Baltodano
Thanks this information is very important
[Translate](#)
Like • Reply • Apr 04, 2021, 5:36 AM


 Yeris Garcia
Thanks a lot!!
1 Like • Reply • Apr 08, 2021, 10:17 PM


 jameleth mejia
thanks
Like • Reply • Apr 10, 2021, 11:33 PM

 Felix Reyes
Amazing video. A good way how Teachers learn vocabulary.
[Translate](#)
Like • Reply • Mar 21, 2021, 11:07 PM

 Carlos Enoc González Berrios
that video it's an amazing good material to teach a good class about vocabulary, very interesting because we must be explicit and consistent as well.
Like • Reply • Mar 22, 2021, 5:45 PM


 Blanca Karolina Espinoza Espinales
A lot of information useful to apply in our teaching
Like • Reply • Mar 23, 2021, 11:25 AM


 Lennin Canales
Very nice explanation about the importance of vocabulary
Like • 1 Reply • Mar 25, 2021, 7:03 PM


 Henger Raúl Gómez Rodríguez
yes that's right good explanation
Like • Mar 27, 2021, 4:32 AM



Write a reply...


 Osleydi Vianney Miranda Díaz
Important and useful information. Excellent!
[Translate](#)
Like • Reply • Mar 29, 2021, 8:37 PM

 Henger Raúl Gómez Rodríguez
I agree . Very nice.

 Fanny Alvarez
It was amazing!
Like • Reply • Apr 16, 2021, 7:33 PM



Ramiro Catin posted to Unit 1

Mar 12 · 1:40 AM · 

...

Hello Everyone! I feel so good for participating in this unit. I wish to learn more to be a good English teacher for my students.



María José López posted to Unit 3

Mar 13 · 12:39 AM · 🇺🇸

It has been awesome being part of this course



7 Likes

Comment

Share



Write a comment...



Blanquis Najarro posted to Unit 3

Mar 12 · 10:23 PM · 🇺🇸

I Like it this course, in my opinion is important to learn More methodologies to teach my students.



Juan Zambrana

I like this course a lot. I am focusing on pronunciation from now on

1 Like · Reply · Mar 31, 2021, 9:26 PM



Jamyn Garcia posted to Unit 3

Mar 16 · 5:33 AM · 🇺🇸

Hello Everyone, it's tremendous pleasure to be part of this adventure... Hope we learn a lot and having new perceptions about the language...

Translate

6 Likes

Comment

Share



Write a comment...



Alfredo Roque posted to Unit 3

Mar 15 · 2:12 AM · 🇺🇸

Hello everyone, these courses serve as a guide to improve our teaching towards students..

3 Likes

Comment

Share



Write a comment...



Dario José Flores Fajardo posted to Unit 3

Mar 15 · 12:59 AM · 🇺🇸

it has been such an astonishing experience. being a part of this course



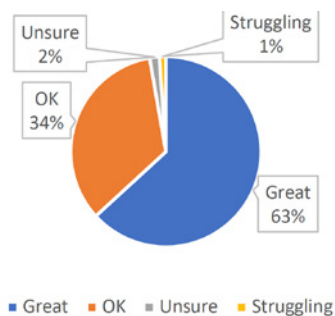
Karla Maria Vanegas Aguirre posted to Unit 2

Mar 14 · 10:03 PM · 🇺🇸

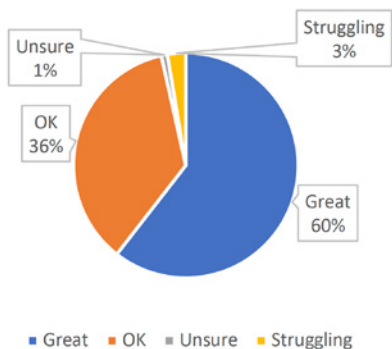
Hello! I enjoy this course. I want to practice in the classroom what I've learned.

Appendix 3: Sample of end-of-unit wellness/ confidence responses

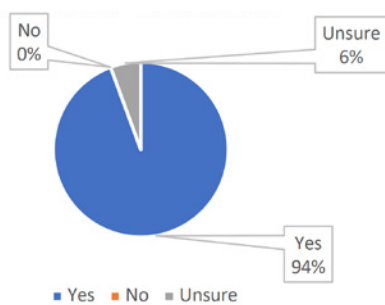
Language Unit 1: Wellness Response Poll



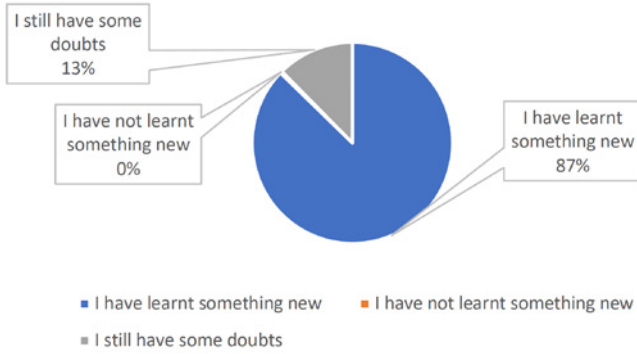
Language Unit 2: Wellness Response Poll



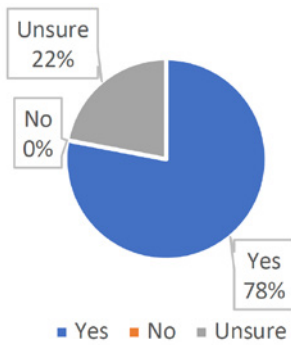
Language Unit 3: I have learnt new vocabulary about food



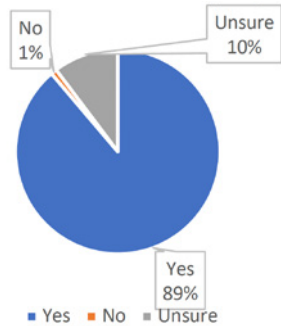
Language Unit 3 – aggregate results



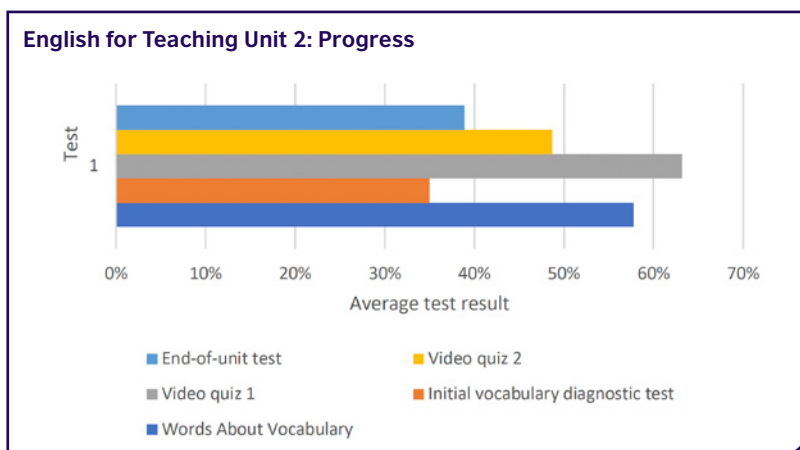
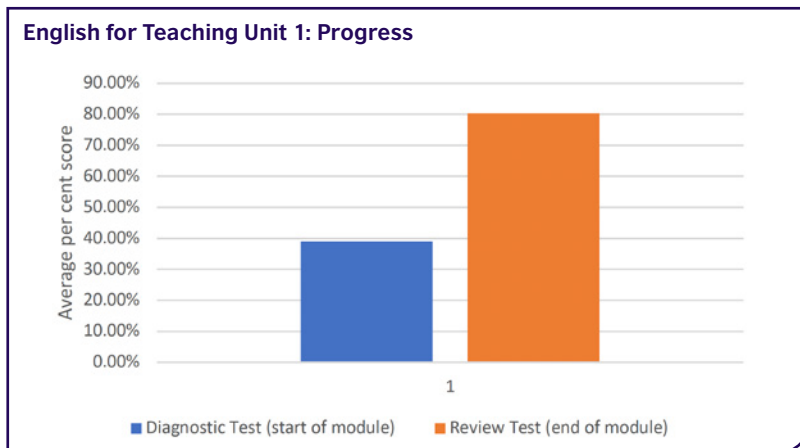
Language Unit 3: I now understand quantifiers



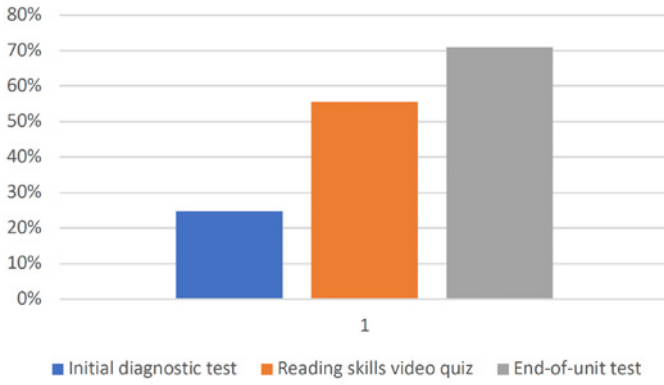
Language Unit 3: I have learnt something new about British culture or geography



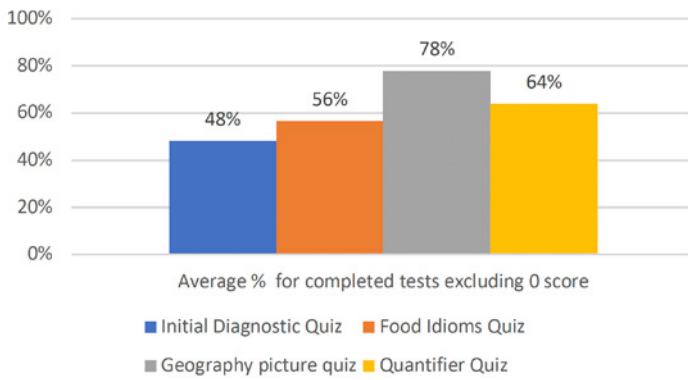
Appendix 3 continued: Sample of student progress tests



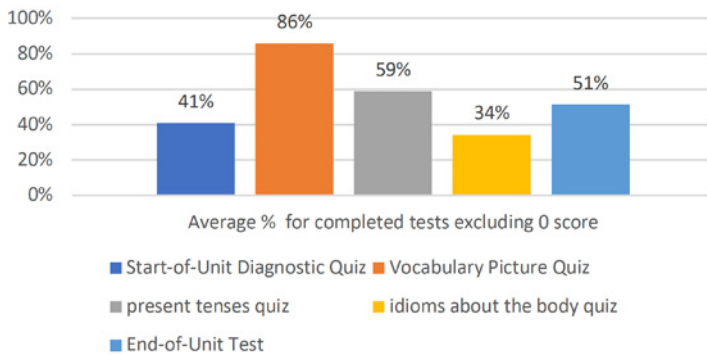
English for Teaching Unit 3: Progress



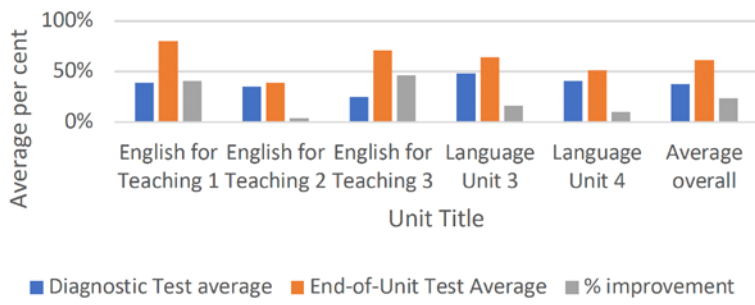
Language Unit 3: Progress



Language Unit 4: Progress



per cent improvement from benchmarked diagnostic to end-of-unit tests



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