

## PRELIM 2

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# Bangladesh: **ETAB** (English Teachers' Association of Bangladesh) and **BELTA** (Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association) with **Bell**

August 2022

# Project background

Partnership overview		
<b>Course overview</b>	<b>ETA partner</b>	ETAB (English Teachers' Association of Bangladesh) BELTA (Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association)
	<b>UKI partner</b>	Bell
	<b>Course length</b>	8 weeks
	<b>Number of groups/cohorts</b>	6 groups (A-F)
<b>Participant profile</b>	<b>Total number of CPs</b>	Approx. 130
	<b>Language level(s)</b>	A1-B1 for teachers, B2-C1 for 'Local Leaders'
	<b>CPs' teaching context</b>	Primary, state schools in Sylhet District
<b>Mode of delivery</b>	<b>Synchronous platforms used</b>	Zoom
	<b>Synchronous session length</b>	Zoom classes – 60 minutes
	<b>Synchronous session frequency</b>	Once a week
	<b>Asynchronous workload</b>	2 hours per week tasks on WhatsApp
<b>Course content</b>	<b>Language development focus</b>	To increase confidence in using English for classroom activities and increase the amount of English used during lessons.
	<b>Methodology focus</b>	To include more communicative activities, including stories and simple games.
	<b>Technology focus</b>	To use WhatsApp and Zoom for professional development, including use of Breakout Rooms for fluency practice and trying speaking activities.

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## Description of the partners

There are two English language Associations in Bangladesh: ETAB (English Teachers' Association of Bangladesh) and For PRELIM 2 both ETAs worked together to implement the project.

### **BELTA (Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association).**

BELTA has around 3,200 members and was the ETA for PRELIM 1.

The key figures were:

- Pranab Kanti Deb – the Belta coordinator responsible for PRELIM 2
- Harunur Rashid Khan - former president of BELTA who helped organise PRELIM 1

BELTA Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BELTAEnglishTeachersBD/>

BELTA website: <https://www.belta-bd.org/>

### **ETAB (English Teachers' Association of Bangladesh)**

ETAB has around 2500 members, mostly primary and secondary teachers with some at tertiary level. The key figures in the partnership were:

Masum Billah (President of ETAB) who coordinated the 'local leaders'

Mrs Rumena Afroza, (ETAB Financial Coordinator) who monitor attendance and participation of the course participants with her team of Local leaders.

ETAB Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/656594638294483>

ETAB website: <https://www.etabbd.com/>

### **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 and was supported in the course delivery by a Bell trainer, Sandy Millin.

## Key features of the context

There are approximately 20 million primary school children in Bangladesh and approximately 4 million primary school teachers. For reasons of scale, the partnership decided to focus on one area of the country, and chose Sylhet, one of the 8 administrative divisions of Bangladesh, as this is a more rural region.

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## Outline of the course and rationale

The course was provided for primary teachers as the ETAs shared that these English teachers lacked confidence in their ability to speak English and be understood by pupils and so often used first languages. The course aimed to improve teachers' ability to use English for some common teaching functions, as identified in the [Needs Analysis Questionnaire](#) taken by 202 teachers. The topics chosen were:

- Giving instructions.
- Giving feedback to students (including error correction)
- Eliciting ideas, words, and sentences from students
- Telling a story
- Playing a game
- Teaching vocabulary
- Setting homework

[Full course schedule available here.](#)

The course was mainly taught via WhatsApp as this is already widely used in Bangladesh. Each Friday we offered one 60-minute class on Zoom each to practice speaking English, but this was not a requirement. Due to not all teachers having access to good enough internet speeds for zoom, we made sure key course materials was delivered via WhatsApp and Zoom was used for optional practice/consolidation.

## Project findings

### Designing / delivering the course

#### Mode of delivery

We decided that WhatsApp would be the best technology fit since teachers already use it. Materials were sent Sunday-Thursday each week. We also wanted teachers to feel more connected and to develop at least the beginnings of a Community of Practice so we split participants into smaller groups of 25-30 teachers. To make this more manageable and to boost the involvement of Bangladeshi teachers keen to take on a leadership or support role, we asked for volunteers to act as 'local leaders'. These Local Leaders (LLs) as the ETAs named them helped track teachers in the groups. They telephoned teachers to help them register and called if they seemed to have dropped out of the course to encourage them to continue. The LLs took charge in the Zoom Breakout Rooms to help facilitate the discussion and encourage everyone to speak. On January 12, 2022 we had an orientation meeting to clarify expectations and give some training about helping the trainers during Zoom classes.

A meeting was held afterward the course ended on April 1 to collect their [feedback](#).

With 231 teachers registered, we planned and created three types of WhatsApp group to manage the whole cohort (see table on next page).

	Central group	6 Small groups	Local leaders' group
Who is a member?	Admins All teachers All local leaders	25-30 teachers per group 2-3 local leaders	Admins All local leaders 25 participants in total
Who can post?	Admins only	All members	All members
What is posted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information about the course in general e.g. key dates</li> <li>The introduction to the week from the materials</li> <li>The checklist for the week from the materials</li> <li>Daily self-study tasks from the materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers' responses to self-study tasks</li> <li>Daily summaries by local leaders (taken from the local leaders' group)</li> <li>Teachers' problems or questions related to the course</li> <li>Weekly optional language feedback (based on the framework from the local leaders' group)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily summary text / voice note guidance from the materials</li> <li>Weekly optional language feedback framework from the materials</li> <li>Local leaders' problems or questions related to the course</li> </ul>

## Methods of delivery

To structure the course, it was broken down into a series of weekly topics. Each week was further broken down into five days with two or three tasks per day. Every task was numbered so that participants could reference them when sharing their answers, and this aspect of the course worked very well.

Tasks were shared once per day in a WhatsApp group where only four admin members could post. As new participants would have been unable to see previous posts, we reposted the activities for days 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 a few times at the beginning until we were sure most participants had joined the course. Participants shared their responses in smaller groups which were overseen by local leaders. We had intended to post summaries each day, but as CPS were responding on very different timescales, this became unhelpful and we handed over greater autonomy to the CPs to organise their own learning.

To support the lower language level, the tasks were pitched at A2, and were glossed at any higher level language. For example:

**Task 2.5.1 – Why ask students for feedback?**  
Julie Tice wrote an article for the British Council Teaching English website called 'Getting student feedback'.

Here are some words you might need to help you understand:

👍👍 If you **encourage** somebody, you talk to them to make them feel good, and feel like they can do something.

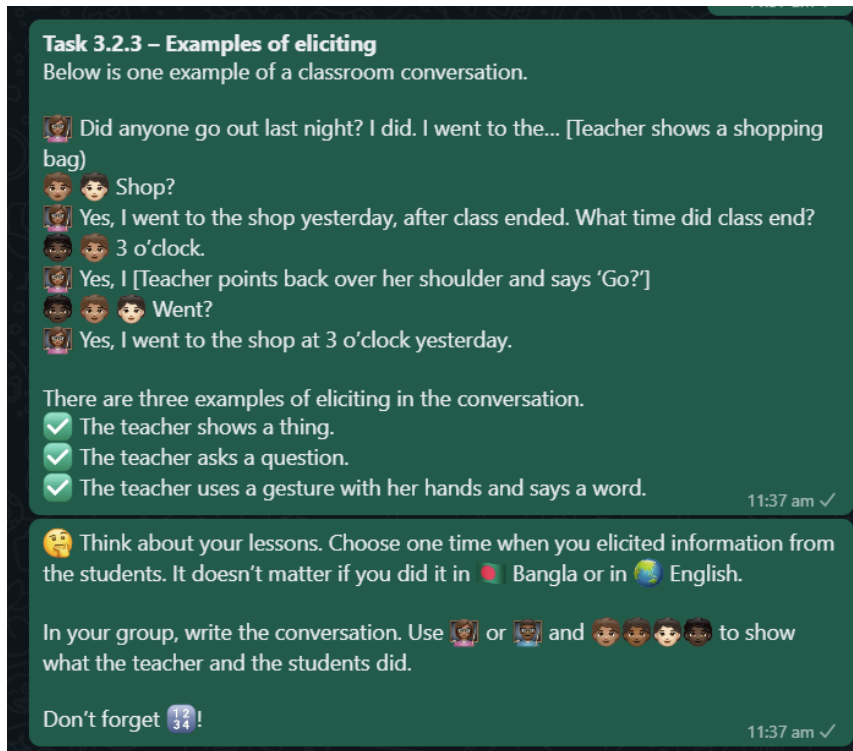
👍👍 If you **appreciate** something, you want to say 'thank you' for it.

👍👍 **views** is a more formal way to say opinions.

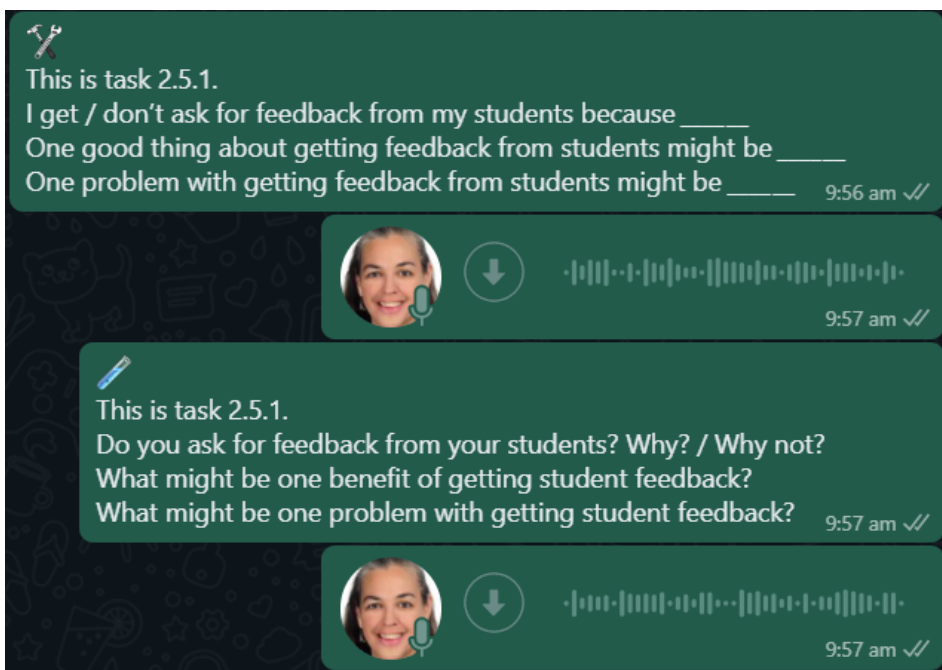
👍👍 If you **take something into consideration**, you think carefully about it before you decide something.

9:56 am ✓

The use of emojis was designed to support the language used in the text and add visual interest:

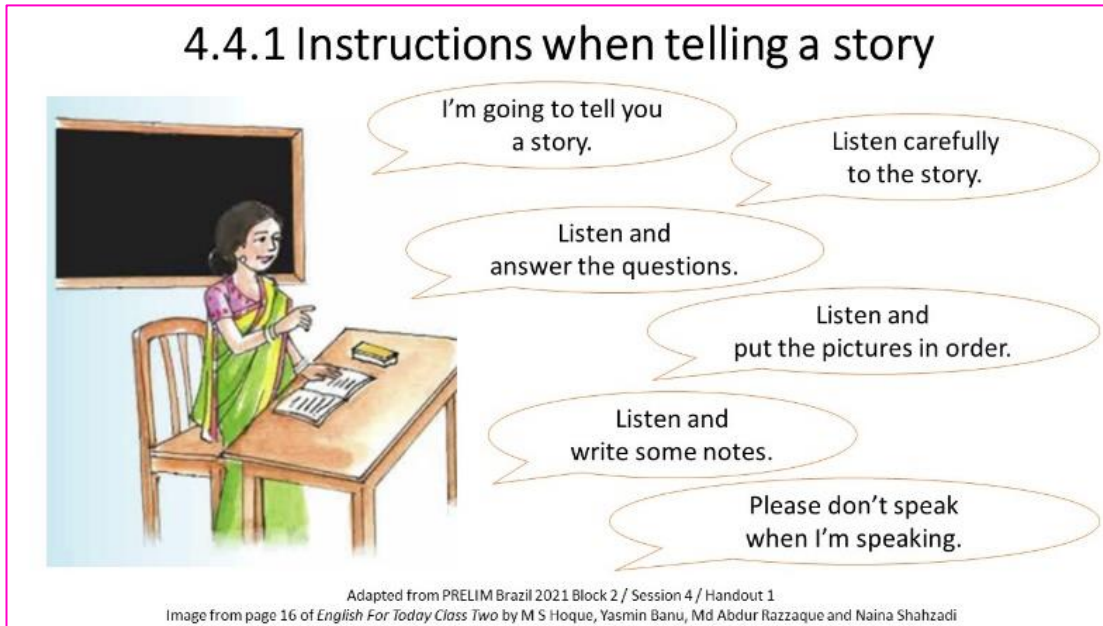


We supplied key phrases participants could use to structure their answers to tasks if they were less sure, and backed these up with recordings demonstrating how to use these key phrases in sample answers:



There were also prompts which could be used to inspire people's answers. We reduced the number of prompts during the course to open up the space for creativity, and this seems to encourage participation.

As takeaways from the course, we included some images of key language which teachers could potentially save on their phones for future reference. Here's one example:



## Working with the CPs

A challenge of asynchronous learning tasks is that there is little opportunity for concept-checking while CPs are engaging with the task. On some occasions, the responses from the CPs were not aligned with the task intention, e.g. actually doing language tasks as learners, rather than analysing them as teachers. Our key learning here is to not only be as clear as possible in the task instructions, but to ensure that example responses are always provided in order to enhance understanding of the activity.

The CPs responded well to the tasks and completed most of them over the duration of the course. We found that a great deal of flexibility needed to be brought to timetabling, however, as some CPs were unable to engage with the tasks within the structure of the timetable. This also led to tasks being completed out of order at times, as the longer response requirements (such as story-telling, for example) were tackled later on when the catch-up had been substantially achieved. Nevertheless, there was a significant active group of CPs who engaged constantly, in addition to those whose participation was less consistent.

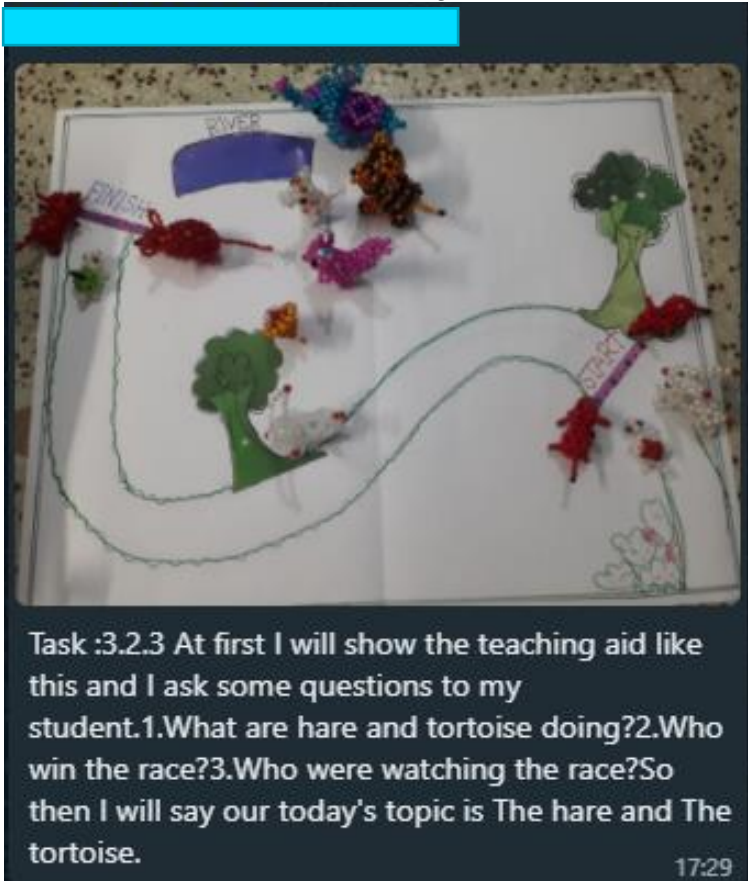
Our learning here would be to have a greater focus initially on the training and support of the local leaders and to identify with them appropriate ways of monitoring participation.

Challenges faced:

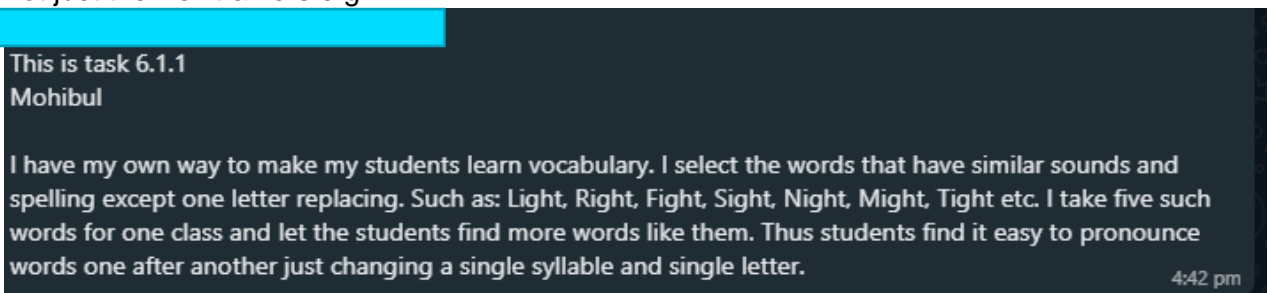
- Participants copying and pasting responses both from the trainer's original posts and from other participants
- Participants going off-topic

Highlights:

- There was some excellent sharing of innovative classroom practice e.g.

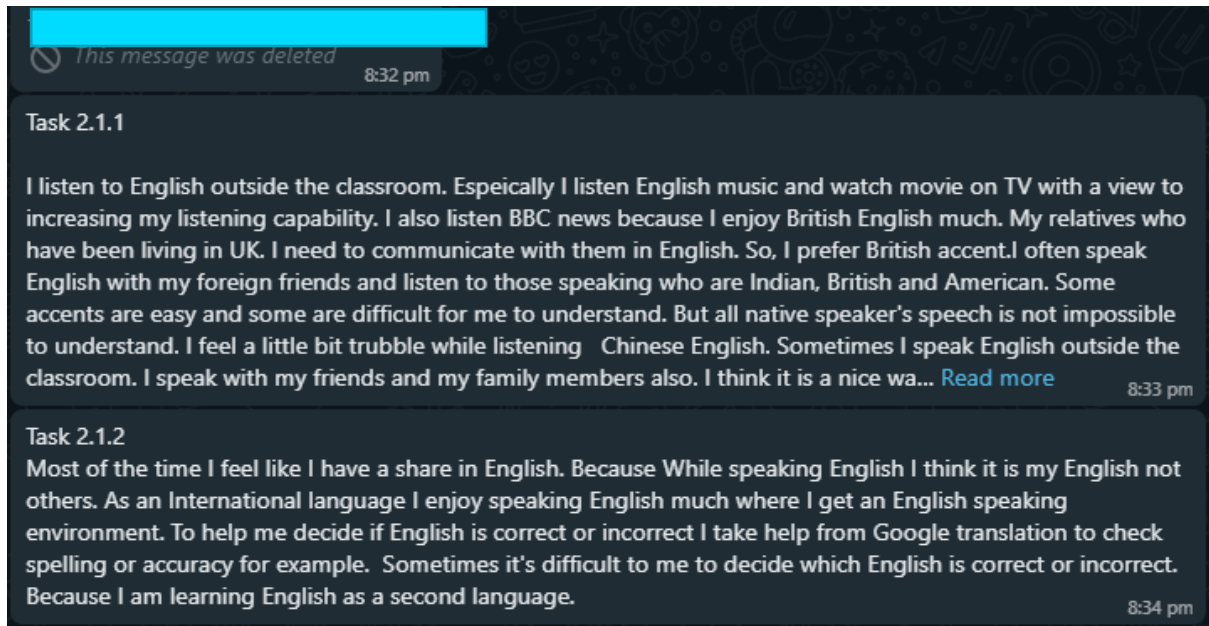


- Teachers introduced their own new ideas to the discussion, allowing others to learn from them, not just the Bell trainers e.g.





- The opportunity to share opinions/experience about using English generated a lot of responses, with people writing quite a lot (see Appendix 4 for details of task). E.g.



### Lessons learned:

- Ensure all tasks are scaffolded clearly with examples provided of what is expected, don't make assumptions of shared knowledge about pedagogical behaviour
- Discuss expectations of behaviour at the start of the course e.g, around copying other people's responses (perhaps provide this information in L1 to ensure clarity)
- Less is more. As early as possible, identify what is an appropriate content load to avoid disengagement due to being overwhelmed by course demand.
- The role of 'local leaders' needs to be carefully monitored and support provided to ensure they understand how best to support colleagues in this context.