

PRELIM 2

Guinea Bissau: ELTA-GB (English Language Teachers' Association in Guinea Bissau) with **CELT** (Centre for English Language Teaching)

August 2022

Project background

Partnership overview		
Course overview	ETA partner	English Language Teachers' Association in Guinea Bissau (ELTA – GB)
	UKI partner	CELT – Centre for English Language Teaching
	Course length	10 weeks (17 th January – 1 st April 2022) with a one week break for a national holiday (28 th February to 3 rd March). There was an interruption due to the Course Director contracting Covid, so the course actually finished on 15 th April and lasted 9 weeks.
	Number of groups/cohorts	1 (2 were intended)
Participant profile	Total number of CPs	48
	Language level(s)	From 14 responses to the Needs Analysis, CPs self-assessed as the following: A1 – 1 CP A2 – 2 CPs B1 – 3 CPs B1+ - 3CPs B2 – 3 CPs C1 – 1 CP C2 – 1 CP
	CPs' teaching context	CPs teach high-school students (for more information, see key features of context)
Mode of delivery	Asynchronous workload	4 hours per week of input via WhatsApp
Course content	Language development focus	Language of the classroom related to methodological areas covered
	Methodology focus	9 topics:

		Starting The Lesson Presenting New Language - Vocabulary Presenting New Language - Grammar Concept Checking Questions Giving Instructions and Instruction Checking Questions Classroom Management Error Correction Speaking Lesson Planning
	Technology focus	How to maximise Google, work-arounds for sound issues

Description of the partners

English Language Teachers` Association in Guinea Bissau (ELTA – GB)

ELTA-GB (established in 2014) has representatives in the eight main regions of Guinea Bissau (GB). Ali Djau is the president and there are 378 members. There is a website ([click here](#)) and Facebook page ([click here](#)). The association aims to improve the quality of English teaching/learning and to promote high standards of teacher training by:

- giving support to English language teachers via workshops and in-service training;
- providing materials and resources (such as on the website);
- sending delegates to conferences to build up international links.

CELT - Centre for English Language Teaching

CELT is a private language school (established in 1989) in Cardiff, Wales with a core team of around 8 full-time teachers/managers with a small administrative team, offering the following relevant provision both face-to-face and online:

- general, exam (IELTS, OET) and specialist English courses for adults;
- general and specialist English courses for young learners (age 13 to 17);
- teacher training (summer courses for foreign teachers of English and bespoke courses).

Key features of the context

Profile of CPs:

- 85.7% of Needs' Analysis respondents were male, 14.3% were female. This roughly corresponds with the overall gender ratio in the ETA which has 342 male members and 36 female;
- 71.4% of respondents work in a rural area, 28.6% work in an urban area;
- CPs predominantly teach high school students. The reported age range is 10 to 36. Their learners' English language level is described as 'low' or 'beginner' to 'more (or) less good';
- The CPs' students face challenges such as a 15km walk to and from school;
- CPs usually have around 45 students in a class but this year this number dropped to around 20-25 due to Covid and a 3-year teacher strike against the government;
- CPs report limited or no access to regular continuing professional development (CPD). There was a separate course currently being run externally focussing on language in the classroom which some CPs were attending;
- Teaching resources are scarce with a severe lack of materials and access to technology, including photocopiers. Primarily, teachers rely on a blackboard and chalk;
- CPs often have second or even third jobs to supplement their income.

Other key contextual factors:

- Internet connectivity is extremely limited and data is very expensive. As a result, the full connectivity fund and an extra grant were requested and granted – this financial help covered both internet connectivity and the costs of CPs travelling to and from face-to-face weekly meetings.

Outline of the course and rationale

In preliminary meetings with the president, pedagogical methodology was established as the primary desired focus of the course. Currently, traditional methods are employed as standard teaching practice (for example, silent reading) and pedagogical techniques or behaviours such as teacher talk time (TTT) are somewhat neglected as there is little or no provision for teacher training, especially in rural areas. Thus, the PRELIM course was identified as a means to provide CPD to the CPs.

In the Needs Analysis, CPs were asked to describe what challenges they regularly faced in the classroom and reported the following issues:

- Lack of confidence – for this reason, a level test for CPs was not advised as it would discourage enrolment on the course;
- Speaking – English is usually a 3rd language in GB. There is a variety of native languages alongside the official Portuguese Creole resulting in interference from both L1 and L2;
- Classroom Management – especially around the issue of class sizes and preventing the use of L1 and L2;
- Presenting vocabulary – how to present and activate new language items;
- Students' misunderstanding of both language items and instructions given in English;

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- Lack of pedagogical materials and technological resources – this was the most commonly reported factor.

When asked which methodological areas the CPs would like to focus on, the respondents rated the selected aspects in the following order:

- 1) Getting Learners Speaking and Pronunciation (64.3%)
- 2) Presenting New Language (57.1%)
- 3) Concept Checking Questions (50%)
- 4) Giving and Checking Instructions (42.9%)
- 5) Providing Feedback and Correction Techniques (28.6%)
- 6) Starting the Lesson (28.6%)

As a result of the information gathered in the exchanges with the ELTA-GB president and from the CPs in the Needs Analysis, it was decided that the course would focus on two key areas:

- Methodology
- CP confidence in the classroom

Methodology was selected due to the limited CPD available and, therefore, CPs felt a lack of confidence in their pedagogical abilities. Due to the perceived symbiosis between these two elements, a focus on methodological input was deemed to assist CPs in both aspects.

The course structure consisted of 9 weeks, with one methodological area being the topic for each weekly unit. At the end of each unit, CPs were asked to reflect and report on how the week's material would impact their teaching performance and their confidence in the classroom. These factors were also assessed in a mid-course questionnaire and end-of-course questionnaire.

As a result of the limitations regarding internet connectivity (availability and cost), the course was run entirely asynchronously via WhatsApp. This was structured as follows:

- 1) A main group was created in which all the CPs were members but only the Course Director and the ETA president were allowed to post. All materials and instructions were posted to this group, including the guidelines on how WhatsApp was to be used during the course;
- 2) Sub-groups were then created based on the geographical region of the CPs with members being added correspondingly. In these smaller groups, CPs could discuss the topics and post their thoughts, questions, and answers to the course materials. This is also where personal or group feedback would be provided by the Course Director.

Further to the WhatsApp groups, CPs were also encouraged to participate in weekly face-to-face meetings to discuss the topics and provide answers to the materials.

Project findings

Working in partnership

Regular contact was maintained between the ETA president and the UKI course director via WhatsApp, as this was deemed the quickest and most convenient method. Communication was further aided by an external UK-based expert on ELT provision in GB, who was also able to provide further details regarding the conditions faced by teachers and internet connectivity limitations. Flexibility was important for both partners. The ETA president is extremely busy performing several key roles related to ELT but was always available, provided vital insight into the challenges on the ground, and is highly determined to improve teaching and learning conditions for English language teachers and learners in GB.

Working within the CoP

Meetings with the project management team provided guidance, reassurance, and strategic advice which were invaluable especially in light of the bespoke nature of this particular course.

Working with the CPs

CP task completion rates were monitored on an Excel spreadsheet and it was noticeable that there was a wide range of levels of participation. However, due to the limited internet connectivity inhibiting the CPs in rural areas particularly, ascertaining the true participation rate was not feasible. Although this occasionally meant that some CPs would temporarily disengage from the course, we noted that there was a return when they were able to. For this reason, the WhatsApp groups were left open to the end of May to allow CPs the chance to finish the materials and receive feedback on their work.

From the regular contributors on the WhatsApp groups, it became clear that the opportunity to participate in PRELIM was seen as invaluable and an extremely worthwhile experience. Comments in the WhatsApp groups and feedback forms included:

Many thanks for this wonderful opportunity.

Thanks a lot, for this great opportunity I hope will be capable to learn so many things with you, and I wish to gain the best things so far.

I truly appreciate what you have done for us! I am so excited to be included and I would be satisfied if this course was extended. we still need this course, and again...words cannot express how grateful I am for this pdf 'HOPEFULLY HELPFUL THINGS' and the extension of this course!

Without doubt, interaction with CPs was the highlight of the course from the perspective of the UK partner.

Designing / delivering the course

(Refer to Course Content and Outline of the Course)

The course was initially designed to be 2x5 weeks with 2 cohorts. However, during the course it was decided that the first cohort would continue as there were not enough CPs to justify a second cohort. New CPs were allowed to join the original cohort.

The course content was based upon findings from initial meetings with the president, suggestions made and issues reported by the CPs in the Needs' Analysis and Mid-Course Questionnaire, and discussions in the WhatsApp sub-groups.

Course outcomes

The course outcomes were measured in 3 ways:

- 1) Respondents identified what had been the most valuable aspect of each week's input and whether they felt there had been a positive impact on their confidence in the classroom;
- 2) A Mid-Course Questionnaire;
- 3) An End-of-Course Questionnaire.

Feedback to the weekly reflective questions included the following comments:

The most valuable thing that that I have learned are different approaches that I can use for each lesson for elementary learners, advanced level and pre-intermediate learners

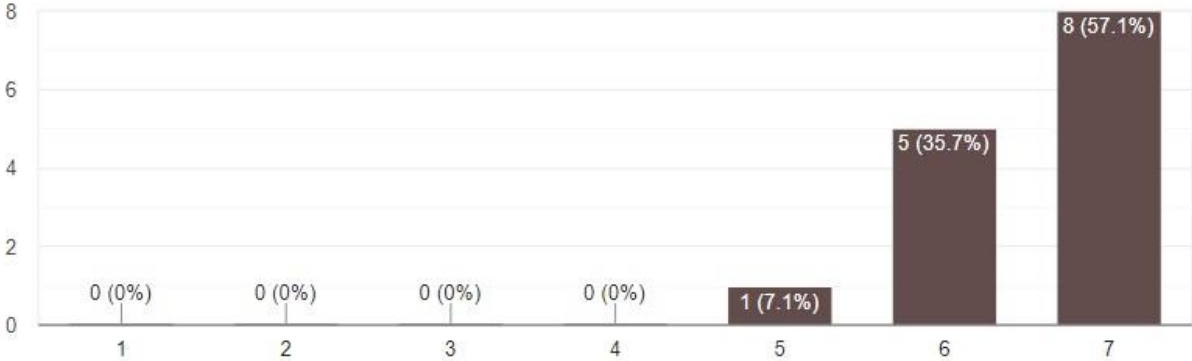
The valuable things I have learned on the course these 3 weeks are: classroom management, the games, error correction techniques...they will help me in my activities and I am so confident when I use one of them in my class. Thank you!

the most valuable thing I learned is instructions Checking Questions (ICQs). I am still teaching very confident.

1. The most valuable thing is CCQs. 2. I am still teaching very confident.

Feedback from the Mid-Course Questionnaire (14 respondents) included the following charts and comments:

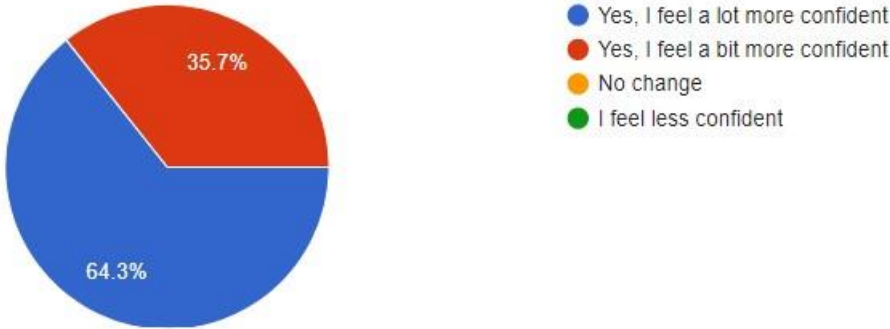
Is the content of the course useful to your lessons?



It's very useful because it relates my daily teaching and my students needs.

It is useful because its helping me do self-evaluation. I see many things that can help me improve my way of teaching.

Has doing this course had an effect on your confidence as a teacher?

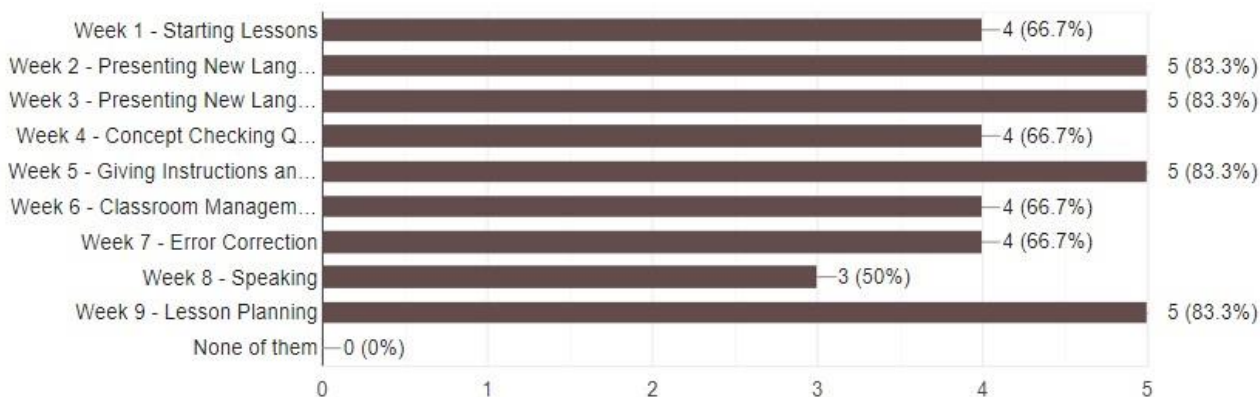


I feel a lot more confident because as a teacher i learned so many things that can be my support and use in my teaching plan also.

My confidence as a teacher is higher, this coursework has a big effect in my daily activities.

Feedback from the End-of-Course Questionnaire (6 respondents) included the following charts and comments:

Which module(s) on the course did you find useful for your teaching?



Many thanks for your great work. Most of the lesson that I did know well before this course, I know how to do it now that's why I choose all lesson because I have learnt many good thing from each lesson.

The course change my way of teaching because it gave a nice piece of land in the way of teaching english in GB.I am so confident now.

How has the course affected your confidence as a teacher?



Learning all these modules with you, I must say I am not the same teacher i know six months ago. I am much more confident now than before.

I am more confidence, because I have learned enough during the course and all what I have learned will be useful in my classes when I'm teaching.

From the feedback, it can be surmised that the course was successful in delivering its two main goals of developing methodological understanding and increasing CPs classroom confidence.

- **Emergent learning**

- 1) Although Internet data is an issue in GB, short videos sent from the UKI partner were popular and could have been further utilised.
- 2) During the course, various issues related to technology arose such as how to maximise the use of Google (in particular, Google translate to provide an oral model for language) and also how to broadcast sound more loudly from a mobile phone. A handout (with instructions and images) was made demonstrating the former and a technique suggested for the latter illustrating a speaker system made from toilet rolls and plastic cups. These alternative strategies were extremely well-received and could be expanded on in future courses.
- 3) Another WhatsApp group was created in week 3 consisting of CPs who were the regular contributors on the WhatsApp sub-groups as a way of identifying further needs. This strategy was extremely useful as a way of gaining insight on needs and issues that CPs regularly face.