

**PRELIM 2**

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**North Macedonia: ELTAM  
MK with UK Language  
Courses**

August 2022

# Project background

Partnership overview		
<b>Course overview</b>	<b>ETA partner</b>	ELTAM MK
	<b>UKI partner</b>	UK Language Courses
	<b>Course length</b>	3 months
	<b>Number of groups/cohorts</b>	1
<b>Participant profile</b>	<b>Total number of CPs</b>	34
	<b>Language level(s)</b>	B2+/C1
	<b>CPs' teaching context</b>	Primary-Secondary
<b>Mode of delivery</b>	<b>Synchronous platforms used</b>	Zoom
	<b>Synchronous session length</b>	60m
	<b>Synchronous session frequency</b>	Weekly
	<b>Asynchronous workload</b>	3h/week
<b>Course content</b>	<b>Language development focus</b>	Functional language
	<b>Methodology focus</b>	Communicative method / teaching as performance / young learners
	<b>Technology focus</b>	Tools for online teaching & engagement

## Description of the partners

[UKLC](#) is a language courses provider which works with international students of English as a second language. Over the past 10 years UKLC has gained experience in delivering teacher training for both native and non-native EFL teachers, in the classroom and online. Since March 2020 UKLC has been delivering successful online teacher training for teachers from all over the world, specifically from Italy, Belarus, Russia, India, Korea, Turkey, Uruguay, Ukraine, Spain and more. These programmes included synchronous and asynchronous teacher training sessions and covered a variety of topics related to English Language teaching techniques and methodology.

[ELTAM MK](#) is a non-governmental, non-profit association of teachers of English as a foreign language in the Republic of North Macedonia, affiliated to IATEFL and TESOL. It was founded in 1999. ELTAM MK provides a forum which unites ELT professionals from across the Republic of North Macedonia engaged in teaching, studying and conveying research on the English language and literature in a methodological context. Its primary goal is to encourage mutual support and make opportunities available for professional development of its members, with the view of improving English language instruction in the country and raising the level of English language learning and acquisition across a broad spectrum of Macedonian professionals, working in different institutions and at various levels.

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## Key features of the context

- The CPs enrolled by the ETA presented a variety of professional profiles that ranged between university students at the beginning of their careers and long-time educators with more than 20 years of teaching experience.
- The language level assessed was comprised between B2 and C1, with a few outliers at both ends.
- About 60% of the CPs worked in Primary Education, 23% in Secondary Education and 12% had yet to start teaching.
- 67% of the CPs worked with 11 to 14 year-old pupils, 48% with pupils between 5 and 10 years old, and 25% with 15 to 18 year-old students.
- In regards to content, most of the participants expressed a preference for an overview of the most recent trends in English teaching (82%), as well as for the opportunity to share good practices among them (72%).

## Outline of the course and rationale

As agreed between ETA and UKI, the course was presented as an opportunity for the CPs to refresh their techniques, methodology and functional language. In addition, it would expose the CPs to some of the newest developments in Language Teaching and provide some practical perspectives on teaching techniques. All with the ultimate goal to improve the CPs' confidence when both using and teaching English in the classroom. It was suggested by the ETA not to advertise the course as a language course, but rather to highlight the focus on methodology, as it would prove to be a successful strategy to involve the more experienced teachers who do not consider language improvement among their most urgent needs.

Divided in 6 weeks, the course ran weekly from Thursday to Wednesday. Each week started with a synchronous webinar and included a variety of asynchronous assignments to cover around 2.5 hours of self-study including readings, video materials and self-reflection tasks. Participants were asked to make connections between the synchronous, the asynchronous sessions and their own teaching contexts when appropriate.

A particular emphasis has been put on teaching young learners, as it was more relevant for a large portion of the CPs. The main topics covered throughout the live sessions are the following:

1. Task Based Learning
2. Teaching as performing <sup>1</sup>
3. Classroom Management
4. Lesson planning
5. Teaching Language Skills & Systems
6. Teaching pronunciation

<sup>1</sup> The choice of this topic in particular was driven by the intent of boosting the CPs' confidence in the classroom. Redefining teaching as a performance with the goal of producing higher engagement among learners and establishing stronger rapport between teacher and pupils, aimed at positively reflect on the day-to-day teaching experience of the participants.

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Access to the [InspireTeach Community](#) was provided to all course participants, as the biggest part of the asynchronous assignments took place on the platform. Along with their weekly tasks, on iTeach, CPs have been given access to a variety of teaching resources, an international community of teachers with a self-development mindset and to biweekly teacher training sessions to continue their development even after the end of PRELIM II.

Both a Google Classroom page and a Slack server were set up to encourage direct communication among the participants and foster a sense of community and exchange.

## Project findings

### Working in partnership

Communication between ELTAM MK and UKLC proved to be the key to reach successful outcomes. After cooperating to draft a document outlining the offer to potential participants, the ETA proved to be extremely proactive in pitching the course to its members and successful in gathering participants to the course. Along with the participants ELTAM MK was able to provide a collection of data regarding the CPs' background and expectations that proved to be fundamental to inform the process of course design.

UKLC gathered mid-course feedback both from the ETA and CPs, which proved to be of great use as ELTAM MK was ready to offer perspectives and suggestions to inform a few ways in which the asynchronous delivery could be optimized, participation encouraged and more support provided in the completion of assignments. More specifically the following measures were implemented:

- Sending email reminders & slack messages advertising the live sessions and reminding the weekly assignments, as well as specific events.
- A weekly 2 hours Slack hangout session was set up on Mondays to discuss any question related to the assignments and provide support to the CPs that needed any.

ELTAM MK found that UKLC as a partner was really flexible and responsive to CP's needs which contributed to the high rate of course completion

### Working within the CoP

Having the opportunity to participate in CoP meetings and having direct access to the community on slack, was a valuable asset to UKLC. Not only did it represent a way to receive direct feedback and answers from colleagues, but it often proved to be useful to browse, as the questions asked by other UKIs highlighted overlooked areas in our course.

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## Working with the CPs

Communications throughout the course took place over Slack, Google Classroom and email. With the objective of streamlining and simplifying exchange, reducing the variety of channels used to interact with the CPs may have beneficial effects.

There was a considerable effort towards the completion of the weekly tasks. Being mindful of how demanding some of the assignments could be, actions were taken to extend the length of the course, ensuring longer times for the CPs to complete them, making use of their free time at the weekend, as suggested by the ETA during our feedback session.

Maintaining a high rate of participation is key for reaching successful outcomes, reconsidering the weekly workload and the time necessary to complete it played a big role in ensuring higher rates of participation, especially in the second half of our course.

CPs being generally preoccupied with school duties and other commitments during the runtime of the course made so that not everyone could always be present at the synchronous sessions. Recording and uploading the live sessions (with presentation slides attached) on google classroom ensured that all participants could at least watch them later or revisit them while completing the weekly assignments.

## Designing/delivering the course

A key aspect that had notable consequences on the course has been the amount of asynchronous workload that was planned in the course design stage. As mentioned above, diluting the workload over longer periods of time, or alternatively, reducing it entirely, may guarantee better outcomes for the course. A course with reasonable workload, may result in higher engagement and motivation among the CPs.

The Live session notes, the presentation slides and the live recordings have been provided to the participants, who are encouraged to make use of those materials to reproduce the session in other contexts in the future.

## Course outcomes

The outcomes of this course were extremely valuable for UKLC, as it has been an opportunity to funnel many of the CPs into iTeach, our growing platform and community of international EFL teachers. The feedback received by the participants has highlighted some of the critical areas that we will need to address in our future courses.

From the comments received during the sessions, mid-course and end of course feedback survey, it is apparent that the CPs appreciated the live sessions.

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All in all, it was a great journey fulfilled with learning new and fun ways of teaching, meeting new people, growing as a person and a teacher and, motivation and encouragement to participate again in similar courses.

It revived my passion for teaching. Moreover, it provided me with new methods of delivering lectures that are extremely beneficial for my students.

Learned new things that I may use as a teacher

Great ideas that can be used in the classroom.

This course made me reflect on my current practice and reconsider certain areas which I can improve.

The course was beneficial for all teachers. It analyses and connects theory and practice. It is worth to take part in.

Some of the constructive feedback the UKI received regarded the support offered to CPs in the completion of the assignments and the workload, and the type of assignments given.

It was a great course, with great materials and trainer, however some of the assignments we had to finish after watching the videos, were too much time consuming. It was fun to think more deeply and write more profoundly, but it could've been a bit shorter. I would've preferred/enjoyed more assignments such as the ones with planning activities, finding solutions to student's problems or difficulties, etc. Nevertheless, I don't regret doing any of it, cause it was an amazing experience, a whole new way to get to know myself more as a person and a teacher, and appreciate more my personal and professional self.

Asynchronous group assignments were suggested, as the time the CPs had to work together during the live session felt limited. This could be addressed in the future by lightening the workload and substituting most assignments with a practical live workshop.

I think there should be at least one asynchronous task in which participants can work collaboratively and meet in their own time. The group work in the live-sessions was great and beneficial, though it is quite time limited.

The accessibility of the platforms used was also informally mentioned as a critical point. Implementing a live session or a tutorial guide on how to use the chosen platforms would have facilitated the learning process for those CPs who had no previous experience using them.

A certificate was awarded to the CPs who completed 80% of the course-work. The document was emailed directly to the participants at the end of the course.