

PRELIM 2

Peru: NETAPERU-TEC (The National English Teachers' Association Peru), Association of University Students (Alumni), Society of English Teachers in Peru and Community of English Teachers with **Languages United Ltd**

August 2022

Project background

Partnership overview		
Course overview	ETA partner	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The National English Teachers' Association Peru (NETAPERU-TEC) 2. Association of University Students (Alumni) 3. Society of English Teachers in Peru 4. Community of English Teachers
	UKI partner	Languages United Ltd
	Course length	10 weeks
	Number of groups/cohorts	4
Participant profile	Total number of CPs	80
	Language level(s)	A2 - B2
	CPs' teaching context	CPs are from both urban and rural/jungle regions of Peru (Chiclayo, Moyobamba, Piura, Puno, Mariela). They teach in Secondary schools, with classes of between 25-35 pupils. The teaching resources generally available to CPs are quite limited.
Mode of delivery	Synchronous platforms used	Zoom and Discord
	Synchronous session length	1.5 hour lessons, 1 hour Discord live Q&A
	Synchronous session frequency	Lessons twice per week (total 3 hours) Discord live Q&A once per week (total 1 hour)
	Asynchronous workload	2 hours per week
Course content	Language development focus	Thematic topic-based input across core skills with associated vocabulary and phonology, delivered at B1 level.
	Methodology focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Building rapport and the Affective Filter ● Flipped Classroom ● Concept Checking Questions ● Mindfulness and Meditation ● Teaching the core skills ● Project Based Learning ● Encouraging speaking ● Using games in the classroom ● Pronunciation strategies ● Harvard Project Zero visible thinking strategies

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Error correction • Assessment in the classroom • Lesson planning and task design Using authentic materials
	Technology focus	Through the digital delivery of the course, good practice using ICT and technology was demonstrated. Key consideration was given to task design to demonstrate interaction patterns available in an online teaching context. The focus was not on introducing CPs to online platforms and tools as the majority did not feel it was applicable to their own teaching context.

Description of the partners

Languages United (UK partner)

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>

ETA partners in Peru

Four ETAs in Peru worked together on the project: NETAPERUTEC, Association of University Students, Society of English Teachers in Peru, and the Community of English Teachers.

Starting as a community of English Teachers in 2008, *NETAPERUTEC* was formed in 2021 in Piura as a registered association with 420 members. It offers an Annual International Conference and Summer and Winter Schools.

Association of University Students (Alumni) is a not-for profit organisation with 350 members who are graduate students from the school of foreign language of Pedro Ruiz Gallo University (Chiclayo – Peru).

English Teachers in Peru is a community of English teachers based in Puno.

Society of English Teachers in Peru is an association based in Arequipa.

Learning point: This project was the first time that the ETAs had worked together and has formed the basis for future collaboration.

Key features of the context

CPs had spent the last two academic years teaching remotely. The overwhelming majority of CPs had only had access to WhatsApp. However, this access did not extend to their own students and despite state-level provision of devices, the internet infrastructure - coupled with the social and economic implications of the pandemic - meant that student participation and access to education had been extremely challenging.

At the beginning of the PRELIM course, CPs were in their long summer break and preparing to start a new academic year in March 2022. The nature of their teaching was still unknown - would they be returning to the classroom, would they be teaching synchronous hybrid lessons or would their classes be split with some receiving face-to-face instruction while the others remained at home and alternating this pattern?

Only a small number joined the Zoom sessions on a laptop or computer, most accessed the input through a phone. Connection was impacted by the regional infrastructure as well as weather conditions related to physical geography.

Outline of the course and rationale

The main objectives of the project were to:

- Improve the English language proficiency speaking of teachers with low proficiency level.
- Improve teacher confidence and willingness to participate in future professional development.
- Provide CPs with methodologies and content that they could adapt/ use in their own classes.

Drawing from our experience in PRELIM1, the project team included representatives from Languages United, the ETA and local coordinators. One-to-one telephone interviews were conducted by the ETA to select candidates, with a standard set of questions being asked to determine their suitability and any difficulties they might experience trying to participate, e.g. internet connectivity.

From the interview results, Languages United created a Course Proposal to meet the CP needs and this was agreed with the ETAs. A participant agreement was signed by each participant to confirm their commitment to the course and their consent/data privacy agreement.

CPs formed four groups, each from a different region and each with a designated coordinator.

A multi-strand syllabus was created: weekly topics were selected because they were likely to be used by CPs in their own teaching context, overlaid with a pedagogical focus.

The course was delivered by two teachers. A single teacher led each lesson and alternated the groups they taught each week, thereby giving the CPs exposure to multiple teaching styles and classroom management techniques.

Each lesson contained language improvement tasks, content that could potentially be recycled by CPs in their own context and guided discussion examining methodologies behind the task presentation.

CPs were expected to undertake a minimum of 2 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 and the completion of guided reflection activities.

Project findings

Working in partnership

The ETA's input into the organisation, participant selection and course planning was critical to the success of the project. The appointment of coordinators was especially important for communicating with and motivating participants.

An attendance spreadsheet was shared with the coordinators to allow them to monitor attendance, and they would call/text participants to check if CPs were having difficulties joining lessons.

The ETA organised follow-up meetings with the CPs to ensure they benefited from the lessons and the designated coordinators had access to the lesson recording to provide the support that would be most beneficial. Coordinators also arranged meetings with the CPs to check progress and ensure they had all the information required to join classes.

Learning point: The sharing of CP attendance and the recordings of lessons was important to the support provided to CPs by the ETAs.

A dedicated Discord channel provided effective communication between the teachers, coordinators, and other members of the project team. It was felt by both parties that the project team worked well to deliver the project together.

Working within the CoP

NILE's initial communication with the ETAs, coordination of the CoP, and monitoring of the project ensured that the project made a good start and kept on track. There were useful CoP meetings to discuss common topics and issues across projects that ensured we felt part of the PRELIM community.

Working with the CPs

The challenge of working with a group of 80 CPs was how to foster a sense of community in an online setting and ensure motivation remained throughout the 10-week course. Each group of 20 soon assumed their own identity, in part due to the CPs shared experiences of regional settings and of 80 participants, only 1 withdrew from the project due to a change in personal circumstances.

Learning point: Delivering a concentrated programme of synchronous input allowed for teachers and CPs to form a close connection and a deliberate plan to include at least one breakout room task in each lesson enabled the CPs to form connections with each other.

“I am happy to participate in this course ... it permits me to interact with other teachers and improve my pedagogical practice.” (CP feedback comment)

“It is amazing to know that technology can get us together through a computer and share experiences for everyone’s benefits.” (CP feedback comment)

Learning point: Real-time contact was crucial in building community and confidence and was underpinned by asynchronous support through the Discord chat function.

The challenging teaching context of the previous two years coupled with high infection rates of COVID-19 among CPs and/or close family members and connectivity issues informed our classroom management approach with the group.

Learning point: We took a flexible and gentle approach with our expectations for CPs to provide a supportive learning environment and maximise motivation and participation.

Finding that CPs circumstances differed widely, the teachers were able to identify barriers to learning and experiment with approaches to mitigate these. For example, presentation slides were made available in a shared Google Drive to enable input tasks to be completed asynchronously and the chat box function in Zoom was exploited to its fullest potential.

Although the timetable was designed to accommodate the four separate groups, the end of the PRELIM course ‘clashed’ with the start of the academic year and CPs’ teaching commitments. We offered the full programme of lessons to all CPs on a ‘come when you can’ basis and a number of CPs took advantage of this flexibility.

Designing/delivering the course

The general course outline was designed in collaboration with our ETA partners in Peru.

The course material was designed by the teachers delivering the course, taking into account the English level of the CPs, their teaching context and the desire to include both a language improvement and methodological focus.

A slide presentation designed by the trainers was used as the basis for the synchronous Zoom input.

Learning point: to accommodate patchy internet connection, care was taken to include all instruction in written and spoken form.

Learning point: the 90-minute input length worked well, with a clear change of pace/focus at the 60-minute mark when CPs' attention naturally waned and a 'screen break' strategy was introduced.

A one-hour, weekly Q&A session was managed synchronously by the two teachers using Discord, and open to the whole CP cohort. The discussions had a pedagogical focus instigated by a CP question. We encouraged CPs to share ideas, website links, blog articles, relevant YouTube clips etc and a summary document was created and shared after each session.

Materials, resources and links to lesson recordings were also shared within Discord.

Learning point: Discord was a good platform to use, away from the clutter of the personal social media platforms but with the same ease with which to share links etc

The initial course design incorporated language input at the CP levels of A2-B2, but as their own learner groups were almost exclusively pre-A1/A1 the course tutors re-directed discussion towards sharing ideas on how to adapt materials to suit very low-level learners.

Social/cultural interaction

"The teachers had the great idea of cooking and preparing a recipe. This was a very warm experience because no matter the distance, I felt that we all were together sharing a nice moment, which was supported by technology. Some Peruvian teachers also prepared the recipe and others just observed and smelled virtually, but we all were present. This type of sensation and feeling is what we need to create with our students and make them participate all the time." (CP feedback comment)

CPs in the rural and jungle areas depended on mobile data to join classes. The Connectivity Fund that was provided was used mainly in Moyobamba and Puno, as well as some CPs in Chiclayo who relocated to rural areas for work.

Course outcomes

Across the board there was extremely positive feedback from the CPs on all aspects of the course, suggesting that the course met the objectives in addressing the competencies identified by the initial needs analysis and that the CPs had developed their confidence and were already implementing some of the activities explored in the course with their own students.

"I feel so happy and motivated to improve my performance as a teacher." (CP feedback comment)

“This experience has been great for all of us. I hope we always can be in touch in order to exchange experiences and maybe materials and resources. Learning from our different realities really enriches us and makes us grow as humans and professionals.” (CP feedback comment)

“Personally, the course helped me improve my language to support my professional teacher development.” (CP feedback comment)

“The examples and materials will help me a lot with my students.” (CP feedback comment)

Emergent learning

“The course helped me to apply different strategies for my classes in the new school after the pandemic. I feel confident with my teachers and my colleagues.” (CP feedback comment)

“I feel more confident talking to my students and I feel better about myself.” (CP feedback comment)

The trainers adapted their own teaching practice as a result of the practical implications of teaching online groups of 20, creating a systematic code of visual icons to aid instructions for desired responses from the CPs, e.g. use chat box, use notebook, whole class discussion.