BRITISH COUNCIL

PRELIM 2

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Tanzania: TELTA (Tanzanian English Language Teachers' Association) with Centre of English Studies

August 2022

Project background

Partnership overview		
Course overview	**ETA partner**	TELTA (Tanzania)
	UKI partner	Centre of English Studies
	Course length	12 weeks
	Number of groups/cohorts	4 groups
Participant profile	**Total number of CPs**	80
	Language level(s)	B1-B2
	CPs' teaching context	Primary and Secondary
Mode of delivery	**Synchronous platforms used**	Zoom
	Synchronous session length	1 hour
	Synchronous session frequency	1 per week
	Asynchronous workload	2 hours per week
Course content	**Language development focus**	a. Modal Verbs b. Quantifiers and Determiners c. Games and Other Activities
	Methodology focus	a. Developing Speaking Skills b. Teaching Grammar c. Classroom Management d. Developing Writing Skills e. Planning a Lesson
	Technology focus	a. Using Zoom b. Using Google Classroom c. Using Vocaroo d. Using Trello

Description of the partners

The UK partner for this course is Centre of English Studies (CES). CES is a family run language school. Founded in 1979 which has grown to an international language school with 8 year-round centres in Ireland, England, Scotland and Canada. CES is recognised and accredited by the British Council in the UK, as well as having four year-round schools being full EAQUALS members. All CES schools in the UK are full members of English UK.

In Tanzania, the partner organisation is the Tanzanian English Language Teachers' Association (TELTA), represented by the TELTA Committee. TELTA is the product of what so called Teachers' Development Meeting (TDM) as initiated in 1990's during the English Language Teaching Support Program. In 2011, TDM was transformed into TELTA. TELTA is now an Associate member of IATEFL (International Association of Teaching English as a Foreign Language) and an affiliate member of TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages). TELTA has chapters in Mwanza, Arusha, Mbeya, Dodoma, Tanga, and Morogoro.

Key features of the context

A crucial feature of the initial planning and preparation for this course was the collaboration between CES and TELTA in understanding and arranging for the facilitation of all potential course participants (CPs) with due consideration to all contextual conditions. To this end, CES sought information on the general context of education in Tanzania informally from the TELTA committee and in a more comprehensive fashion through survey feedback from potential course participants. Through this we gained a number of insights which helped shape both the overall structure of the course (and how it was to be delivered) as well as the content of the sessions (both synchronous and asynchronous). Of particular interest to CES was a focus on any potential friction factors which may be encountered by CPs in their engagement with the course and its content and an attempt to anticipate and reduce these problems as soon as possible.

Key information gathered from the TELTA members which helped in course design included:

1. An understanding of how much time the CPs would have to devote to this course
2. An understanding of the level of technological expertise allowed us to choose appropriate online tools
3. An understanding of the CPs' context of teaching was crucial, especially the discovery that although initially there was to be an even split of 30 Primary School Teachers and 30 Secondary School Teachers, the final CP numbers included more slightly more of the latter than the former
4. The language development needs of the CPs
5. The teacher development needs and interests of the CPs in terms of teaching methodology

In addition to gathering this information from TELTA, CES also engaged in an internal skill and resource audit to assess our capabilities in delivering such a course. In doing this, we came up against several challenges which needed to be addressed:

1. The training team at CES had a lack of experience with the nature of the course being proposed (with blended synchronous and asynchronous) and needed instructions in how best to deliver this successfully.
2. The training team at CES had no direct experience of the teaching context in Tanzania and had to quickly put their understandings of teaching contexts in other parts of the world to practical use in building up a picture of the needs of the CPs.
3. The training team had been used to working with CPs who utilised similar online platforms in their own contexts and so required little technological guidance. The lack of this working knowledge in the Tanzanian context required the inclusion of video tutorial sessions on the use of Google Classroom and Trello.

Collecting all of this information on the context of both the course participants and on the CES training team allowed us to make clear and logical decisions in terms of course design and delivery at an early

stage. This clarity in decision making allowed for a smooth course roll-out and ensured that constraints were minimised and opportunities taken, where possible.

Outline of the course and rationale

Content and Structure

Based on preliminary meetings between CES and TELTA it was clear that there was to be a dual focus to this course. The teaching cohort in questions were interested in not only engaging in language development sessions to deal with some skill gaps but they were also keen to focus on some elements of teaching methodology.

Working in collaboration, the course organising committee of CES and TELTA then set about creating a realistic timetable that would take into account and provide some balance between both the time constraints of the teachers in their own context and their perceived needs. To this end, we set in motion a project plan that traced the following steps:

1. Information gathering

Using Google Forms a Language Assessment and Needs Analysis was created and shared with all CPs. This form included a basic language level assessment as well as questions regarding perceived teaching needs, and they structure of content and delivery preferable to the CP cohort. Figure 1 shows the organisers view of the form front page, with 76 total responses (out of a total of 80 CPs).
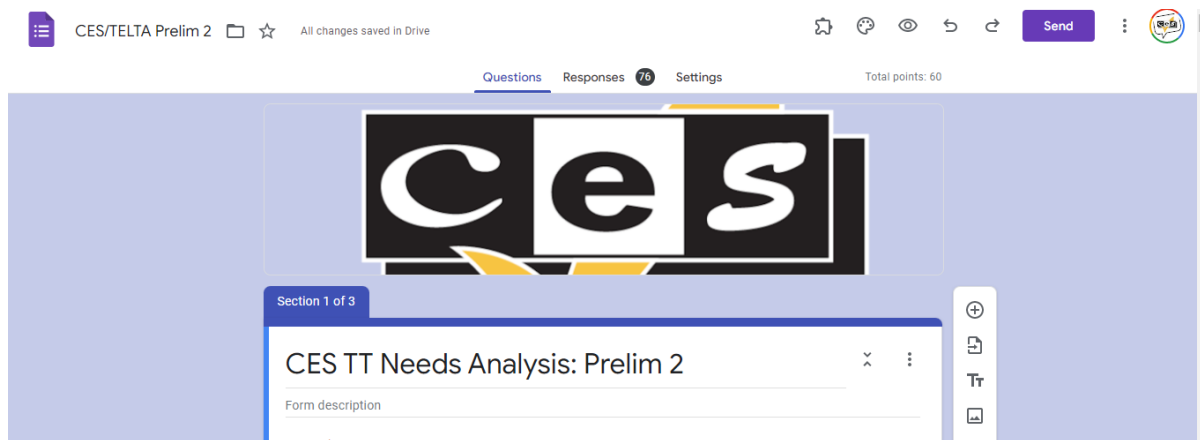

Fig. 1

2. Information collation

The Training Team in CES then tool the key pieces of information garnered by the Needs Analysis and set about turning it first into a comprehensive and comprehensible programme for the course. This was then presented to the TELTA committee for comment and editing, before the final version was created, as seen in figure 2.

Week	Start date	Topic of synchronous lesson	Follow up asynchronous tasks
Week 1	Jan 17th	Language Lesson: Introduction and Personal Aims	Creating a personal study and development plan

Reading Task |
Week 2	Jan 24th	Methodology Session: Developing Speaking Skills	Creating a Speaking task/lesson and share with group in collaborative forum
Week 3	Jan 31st	Language Lesson: Modal Verbs	Creating a worksheet using the different Modal functions
Week 4	Feb 7th	Methodology Session: Teaching Grammar	Using Student Sample Writing tasks to correct grammar and plan for remedial work
Week 5	Feb 14th	Language Lesson: Quantifiers and Determiners	Completing Sample Language Tasks
Week 6	Feb 21st	Methodology Session: Classroom Management	Using Case Studies to give advice on classroom management issues
Week 7	Feb 28th	Language Lesson: Assessment Week	Creating and recording spoken presentation and sharing with group
Week 8	March 7th	Methodology Session: Developing Writing Skills	Reading tasks with commentary and collaboration
Week 9	March 14th	Language Lesson: Games and Other Activities	Group project to compile lists of effective gamification exercises
Week 10	March 21st	Methodology Session: Planning a Lesson	Creating a detailed lesson plan
Week 11	March 28th	Language Lesson: Focus on 'My Learner Independence'	Creating a follow on study plan with a focus on independent skill development
Week 12	April 4th	Methodology Session: Creating a Plan for Future Development	Creating a professional development plan

Fig. 2

3. Session content

With the general structure and schedule agreed upon, the Training Team in CES got to work on creating content for the sessions. At the same time, the TELTA committee shared the course proposal and timetable with the CPs in a new WhatsApp created especially for this course. This allowed the CPs to begin to plan for their full participation and interact with each other easily.

It was decided that the CES Training Team would create full course content for the first two sessions and more skeletal session overviews for the following weeks. This would allow us to gather information on whether the material was pitched correctly and gauge whether it was actually beneficial to the CPs. This was done by the trainers in context through assessment, monitoring, and feedback, as well as more formally in meetings between CES and the TELTA committee.

4. Class Allocation

The designation of CP to class and time slot was left solely to the TELTA committee. With their better understandings of the local context and timetable, as well as their knowledge of how teachers in different context may best be paired together, this was judged prudent.

Delivery

For the delivery of this course, based on majority feedback from the Needs Analysis and consultation with the TELTA committee, it was decided:

a) The class size would be maximum 20 CPs
b) There would be 1 synchronous hour-long session every week
c) This would be supported by 2 hours of asynchronous study every week
d) The live sessions would be delivered on Zoom
e) Google Classroom would be used as the primary Learning Management System for each group
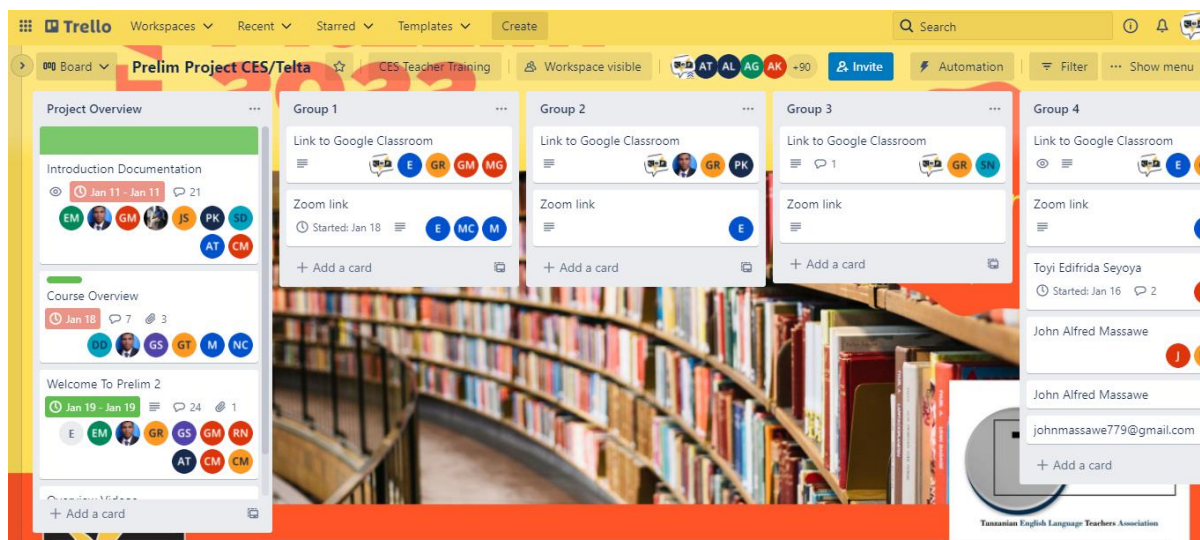f) Trello would be used as a hosting platform for all general content documentation and links (see figure 3)

Fig. 3

These choices were revised throughout the course, with only minor issues arising in terms of CPs technological competence which were dealt with by the creation of tutorial videos.

Project findings

Working in partnership

The partnership between CES and TELTA has been smooth and fruitful throughout with all parties fulfilling and often exceeding expectations at junctures in the project. From the CES perspective, I can say that TELTA have been a pleasure to work with due not only to their enthusiasm and commitment but also to their flexibility and 'in country' knowledge. I really found that in TELTA, we had a partner that we could work and grow with.

From TELTA President Ayoub Msuya:

"The project partnership between TELTA and C.E.S with an outstanding collaboration has bring together expertise and resources that support teachers in Tanzania to explore best teaching and learning methodology, sharpening their professional development career, and hence adapt the 21st century core skills best practices.

Both participants and TELTA Coordinators have learned much about, how to use effective digital tools in distance learning like Zoom, Google classroom and Trello. Also, time management through scheduling the online learning to attend the all session as required, next, in terms of content, we have learned about; planning the lesson, teachers and learners roles, using activities and games in teaching English language, class management and engagement, providing feedback, differentiating learning learners levels and context. To sum up, all these skills and knowledge will promote and improve ESL Classroom teaching and learning in Tanzanian context."

Working within the CoP

The Prelim CoP has been at times affirming, at times supportive, and at times informative at different points during this project. The increase in CoP members from 20 to 40 from Prelim 1 to Prelim 2 has ensured that the experience was somewhat different this time around with less opportunity to build up a clear personal understanding of all of the different projects that people were engaged in. This at times made the communication seem slightly decontextualized as some of the projects and contexts were not as familiar to me as they would have been with the CoP on Prelim 1. Nevertheless, I think the quantity of content and ideas shared within this CoP have ensured that it has been a really useful foundation of support for CES.

Working with the CPs

In terms of the working relationship between the CES Training Team and the TELTA CPs, I can't be positive enough. It was an incredibly valuable learning experience for the CES team to be able to build and deliver this course to such an engaged and motivated group of teachers.

From the CES Training Team lead trainer, Rachael Ball:

Prelim has been an eye-opening experience for me. It has allowed me to further my understanding of different teaching contexts and how approaches to ELT often need to be adapted accordingly due to limitations such as technology, and class size. It has been a rewarding experience in that I have been able to share my knowledge and provide guidance and support to those who really appreciate every moment.

It has been an absolute pleasure working with TELTA. The response and engagement throughout the course was outstanding and, thanks to those who chose to talk about their country for the mid-course assessment, I learnt fascinating information about Tanzania. Prelim has allowed us to establish not only professional, but cultural connections, and I am very grateful to have been a part of it.

Course outcomes

The intended course outcomes were guided by the Needs Analysis and Level Test, as well as in meetings between CES and TELTA. He overall course was intended to have a dual focus, with an overall language development need, as well as a teacher competency need:

a) Language: To effectively deal with stated language issues and assess progress.
b) Methodology: To give the CPs a general understanding of the stated concepts and begin the process of reflection and utilisation in context.

Each session had learning outcomes which fitted into these overall themes and were assessable by the trainer in context. We also included an oral assessment week with recorded presentations shared via Vocaroo.com. Sessions 11 and 12 were final reflection and planning for the future sessions to ensure a degree of sustainability of progress from this course for the CPs.

Emergent learning

There was a huge amount of emergent learning on this course which was exploited and incorporated by both the CPs and the CES trainers.

The main impact that this emergent learning has had is in the fact that the CPs have requested additional support in a number of key areas post course. To this end CES has begun to create a video tutorial series which will hope to cover some of these issues (including 'Setting Lesson Aims', 'Dealing with Larger Classes', etc.)

The final word goes to Ayoub Msuya:

"To sum up, through working with CES in the PRELIM II project the TELTA coordinating team has learnt the spirit of cooperation, collaboration, team work as well as communication skills. We all collaborated and worked as a team to achieve the project goals."